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POEMS OF
ALFRED
LORD
TENNYSON

1829-1869

INCLUDING

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"MAUD," "IDYLLS OF THE KING,"

ETC.

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Poems of Tennyson

1829—1869

POEMS
OF
ALFRED
LORD TENNYSON
1829-1869



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POEMS

ALFRED

LORD TENNYSON

1832



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INTRODUCTION

AFTER a shorter period of neglect than has perhaps ever before fallen to the lot of a great poet, Tennyson is again being read and studied, and he is sharing largely in the greater attention now being paid to English poetry in the curriculum of every large school in the country. Quoted he has always been, for his musical lines easily remain in the memory, but his longer works, with the possible exception of *In Memoriam*, were for some time greatly neglected. If we look for the cause of this neglect it is not far to seek. At the passing of the Victorian age there came a day of small things for literature and especially for poetry. Short stories and ephemeral songs were the "best sellers," and the Great War naturally increased the demand. Last, but not least, the increase in motoring took away from the library and the music-room a good many of those still left there by the cinema and the music-hall.

The poetry of Tennyson, of course, suffered from this condition of society, for people in a hurry resent the call to stop and think, nor endure to pursue the lines of thought so often suggested by the poet. For Tennyson is, above all, a serious poet, and his early life, early work, and early friendships all bear evidence to his reflective character. This tendency was deepened and strengthened by the loss of Arthur Hallam in 1833, and his work from that date onward was almost entirely devoted to themes either wholly serious, or, like the *Idylls of the King*, mainly so. His first ambition was to become a popular poet, and it was this feeling which strengthened, if it did not even form, his youthful admiration of Byron, the poet whose verses were then in everybody's mouth. Like Byron he possessed a power of satire, as shown by his scathing reply to Lytton's attack in "Punch,"

1846, but satire was contrary to his nature, and therefore only put forth under extreme provocation and speedily regretted. His idea of poetry and the poet's mission was a very high one, and he so disliked all excess in language or action that he became the absolute type of correctness and reserve, and attained a popularity greater even than Byron's by themes as diverse as the poets themselves. The secret of their success in both cases was, therefore, evidently that they impressed their own personal character on their writings. Tennyson's verse is more musical, more highly refined and polished than Byron's, and it is almost as clear. No society was needed to discuss and search out the meaning of Tennyson's phrases, but the very quality which delights one age is apt to pall upon the next, and thus in the period following Tennyson the far-fetched and the bizarre, both in form and expression, became the rage, until at length the fascination of unravelling a meaning involved in recondite words and phrases gave way in its turn, and the cry of "back to Wordsworth" has been followed by that of "back to Tennyson."

Perhaps even greater than in the form and clearness of his presentation of legendary lore or ordinary scenes of country life is his appeal in things spiritual; his "honest doubt" concerning the validity of creeds and formulæ finds the same response to-day that it did in the last century. Had he been more the mouthpiece of a sect or party, his poetry would inevitably have lacked the quality of general application, which has now brought about its revival, especially in educational circles. Tennyson was never a preacher in the ordinary sense of the term, but it was his constant endeavour to lead men to think about the problems of existence, to reflect upon the eternity of the spirit of man, and to see the evidences of the love of God in Nature. His religious attitude has been accounted for by the Calvinistic ideas in his family and the broad church views of his father; loving-kindness was more important in his eyes than belief in any dogma, and he had no sympathy with the Athanasian Creed. But, undoubtedly, the chief force that influenced him was his mother's example, a power far more potent, more constant, and more impressive than

even a mother's words. She has been described as a woman who was always doing good by natural instinct, and his beautiful description of her in *Isabel* :

“Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,”

shows whence he derived that love of “golden charity” with which his poems are permeated; that charity which tenderly softened the last years of Guinevere, gave Lancelot the death of a holy man, and could not even endure that the caitiff Edgren should die in dishonour. His charity extended to wild animals, and in early youth he so roused the anger of the gamekeepers by raising their snares and traps, that his life was almost in danger from their resentment. In his love of “all winged things,” he was much in advance of his time, and it would have rejoiced his heart to see the increasing protection accorded to wild birds, both by Act of Parliament and by the sanctuaries secured for them by private effort.

Tennyson possessed such a high degree of veneration, that he was often discontented with the customary definitions of the Deity, and sought a more personal conception of the Infinite Spirit, which animates the universe. God appeared to him to be so incommensurable that our utmost efforts to comprehend Him could never afford us anything approaching a complete idea, since the finite cannot conceive the infinite. He hardly dared to pronounce the name of God, fearing that he might be guilty of irreverence in belittling Him, and he sometimes calls Him the “Nameless,” thus agreeing with the Hebrew idea in the Name of God called “the name of four letters,” which is unpronounceable, as it consists of four vowels. One is tempted to wonder whether he ever came across Luis de León's commentary on the name Jesus, where he points out that Jesus in Hebrew contains the four letters with the addition of two more which make it pronounceable; God being thus revealed in the personal name of Christ. There was a well-known librarian who had the same feeling of veneration so strongly developed, that he endeavoured to exclude the word God as a heading in the catalogue under his

control, but he tolerated Deus and Dieu, and even the German Gott!

Although in early years Tennyson showed an appreciation of the humorous, and even of the comic in the play of words, yet after the loss of Hallam, in 1833, there is not much trace of humour in his works. This was, perhaps, another element which contributed to his temporary eclipse, for the abounding fun of Dickens, Thackeray, Gilbert, and a host of others, had started a taste for the brilliant humour they created. With humour of this kind Tennyson had little sympathy, for it is well known that he did not at all relish even the kindly wit of Sir William Harcourt, as witness the story thus related by Mr. G. W. E. Russell ("Collections and Recollections," p. 199). "When Lord Tennyson chanced to say in Sir William Harcourt's hearing that his pipe after breakfast was the most enjoyable of the day, Sir William softly murmured the Tennysonian line :

'The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds.'

(*Princess*, iv. 32).

Some historians say that he substituted 'bards' for 'birds,' and the reception accorded by the poet to the parody was not as cordial as its excellence deserved."

Tennyson was man, artist, and poet all in one. Manly in appearance, in tastes, and habits, adding to his love of Nature an unusual appreciation of the advances of science, he was also endowed with an almost feminine tenderness, and consequently even ordinary criticism touched him keenly, for those who criticized him rarely appreciated the qualities of delicacy and restraint which dominated his character. He looked for recognition of his intentions, and such a criticism of *In Memoriam* as Taine's ("Hist. Lit. Ang.," v, 436) would have pained him deeply if he ever saw it. As artist and poet his constant search for the exact word and form of expression had evidently limited his output to a considerable degree, for his last words were expressions of regret that he had accomplished so little, and that so much he intended to say must be left unsaid.

G. F. BARWICK.

POEMS (THE LARGER WORKS),

1847-1869

THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighbouring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And 'this' he said 'was Hugh's at Agincourt;

And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him'—which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horse's heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said.

'To the Abbey: there is Aunt
 Elizabeth
 And sister Lilia with the rest.'
 We went
 (I kept the book and had my
 finger in it)
 Down thro' the park: strange
 was the sight to me;
 For all the sloping pasture mur-
 mur'd, sown
 With happy faces and with
 holiday.
 There moved the multitude, a
 thousand heads:
 The patient leaders of their
 Institute
 Taught them with facts. One
 rear'd a font of stone
 And drew, from butts of water on
 the slope,
 The fountain of the moment,
 playing now
 A twisted snake, and now a rain
 of pearls,
 Or steep-up spout whereon the
 gilded ball
 Danced like a wisp: and some-
 what lower down
 A man with knobs and wires and
 vials fired
 A cannon: Echo answer'd in her
 sleep
 From hollow fields: and here
 were telescopes
 For azure views; and there a
 group of girls
 In circle waited, whom the electric
 shock
 Dislink'd with shrieks and laugh-
 ter: round the lake
 A little clock-work steamer pad-
 dling plied
 And shook the lilies: perch'd
 about the knolls
 A dozen angry models jetted
 steam:
 A petty railway ran: a fire-
 balloon
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky
 groves
 And dropt a fairy parachute and
 past:
 And there thro' twenty posts of
 telegraph

They flash'd a saucy message to
 and fro
 Between the mimic stations; so
 that sport
 Went hand in hand with Science;
 otherwhere
 Pure sport: a herd of boys with
 clamour bowl'd
 And stump'd the wicket; babies
 roll'd about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass; and
 men and maids
 Arranged a country dance, and
 flew thro' light
 And shadow, while the twangling
 violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie,
 and overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of
 lofty lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze
 from end to end.

Strange was the sight and
 smacking of the time;
 And long we gazed, but satiated
 at length
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd
 and ivy-claspt,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a
 fire,
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and
 frost they gave
 The park, the crowd, the house;
 but all within
 The sward was trim as any garden
 lawn:
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady
 friends
 From neighbour seats: and there
 was Ralph himself,
 A broken statue propt against the
 wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with
 sport,
 Half child half woman as she was,
 had wound
 A scarf of orange round the stony
 helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a
 rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from
 his ivied nook

Glow like a sunbeam: near his
tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay
the guests,
And there we join'd them: then
the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and
from it preach'd
An universal culture for the
crowd,
And all things great; but we,
unworthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across
the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself
betwixt the bars,
And he had breath'd the Proctor's
dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to
common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a
lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in
grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious
theory.

But while they talk'd, above
their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad;
which brought
My book to mind: and opening
this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two
that rang
With tilt and tourney; then the
tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter
from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness,
and 'Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head
(she lay
Beside him) 'lives there such a
woman now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia 'There are
thousands now
Such women, but convention beats
them down:
It is but bringing up; no more
than that:
You men have done it: how I
hate you all!

Ah, were I something great! I
wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would
shame you then,
That love to keep us children! O
I wish
That I were some great Princess.
I would build
Far off from men a college like
a man's,
And I would teach them all that
men are taught;
We are twice as quick!' And
here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron
with her curls.

And one said smiling, 'Pretty
were the sight
If our old halls could change their
sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dow-
agers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their
golden hair.
I think they should not wear our
rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-
moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet
I fear,
If there were many Lillas in the
brood,
However deep you might em-
bower the nest,
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd
foot:
'That's your light way; but I
would make it death
For any male thing but to peep
at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at her
self she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful
thorns,
And sweet as English air could
make her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names
upon her,
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrate-
ful Puss,'

And swore he long'd at college,
 only long'd,
 All else was well, for she-society.
 They boated and they cricketed;
 they talk'd
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
 They lost their weeks; they vext
 the souls of deans;
 They rode; they betted; made a
 hundred friends,
 And caught the blossom of the
 flying terms,
 But miss'd the mignonette of
 Vivian-place,
 The little hearth-flower Lilia.
 Thus he spoke,
 Part banter, part affection.
 'True,' she said,
 'We doubt not that. O yes, you
 miss'd us much.
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it
 you did.'

She held it out; and as a parrot
 turns
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving
 eye,
 And takes a lady's finger with all
 care,
 And bites it for true heart and not
 for harm,
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she
 shriek'd
 And wrung it. 'Doubt my word
 again!' he said.
 'Come, listen! here is proof that
 you were miss'd:
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up
 to read;
 And there we took one tutor as to
 read:
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the
 cube and square
 Were out of season: never man, I
 think,
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
 For while our cloisters echo'd
 frosty feet,
 And our long walks were stript as
 bare as brooms,
 We did but talk you over, pledge
 you all
 In wassail; often, like as many
 girls—

Sick for the hollies and the yews
 of home—
 As many little trifling Lillas—
 play'd
 Charades and riddles as at Christ-
 mas here,
 And *what's my thought* and *when*
 and *where* and *how*,
 And often told a tale from mouth
 to mouth
 As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:
 A pleasant game, she thought:
 she liked it more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the
 rest.
 But these—what kind of tales did
 men tell men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves?
 A half-disdain
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of
 her lips:
 And Walter nodded at me; 'He
 began,
 The rest would follow, each in
 turn; and so
 We forged a sevenfold story.
 Kind? what kind?
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas
 solecisms,
 Seven-headed monsters only made
 to kill
 Time by the fire in winter.'
 'Kill him now,
 The tyrant! kill him in the sum-
 mer too.'
 Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the
 maiden Aunt.
 'Why not a summer's as a winter's
 tale?
 A tale for summer as befits the
 time,
 And something it should be to
 suit the place,
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
 Grave, solemn!'
 Walter warp'd his mouth at this:
 To something so mock-solemn,
 that I laugh'd
 And Lilia woke with sudden-
 shrilling mirth
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden
 Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had
 touch'd her face
 With colour) turn'd to me with
 'As you will;
 Heroic if you will, or what you
 will,
 Or be yourself your hero if you
 will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,'
 clamour'd he,
 'And make her some great Prin-
 cess, six feet high,
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be
 you
 The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,'
 I answer'd, 'each be hero in his
 turn!

Seven and yet one, like shadows
 in a dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as re-
 quired—

But something made to suit with
 Time and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
 A talk of college and of ladies'
 rights,

A feudal knight in silken masquer-
 ade,

And, yonder, shrieks and strange
 experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had
 burnt them all—

This *were* a medley! we should
 have him back

Who told the "Winter's tale" to
 do it for us.

No matter: we will say whatever
 comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they
 will,

From time to time, some ballad or
 a song

To give us breathing space.'

So I began,

And the rest follow'd: and the
 women sang

Between the rougher voices of
 the men,

Like linnets in the pauses of the
 wind:

And here I give the story and the
 songs.

I

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and
 fair in face,
 Of temper amorous, as the first
 of May,
 With lengths of yellow ringlets,
 like a girl,
 For on my cradle shone the
 Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in
 our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off
 grandsire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had
 foretold,

Dying, that none of all our blood
 should know

The shadow from the substance,
 and that one

Should come to fight with shadows
 and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story
 ran.

And, truly, waking dreams were,
 more or less,

An old and strange affection of the
 house.

Myself too had weird seizures,
 Heaven knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men
 and day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as
 heretofore,

I seem'd to move among a world
 of ghosts,

And feel myself the shadow of a
 dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his
 gilt-head cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd
 'catalepsy.'

My mother pitying made a thou-
 sand prayers;

My mother was as mild as any
 saint,

Half-canonized by all that look'd
 on her,

So gracious was her tact and
 tenderness:

But my good father thought a
 king a king;

He cared not for the affection of
 the house;

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
 For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
 While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
 To one, a neighbouring Princess : she to me

Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old; and still from time to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,

And of her brethren, youths of puiſſance;

And still I wore her picture by my heart,

And one dark tress; and all around them both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,

My father sent ambassadors with furs

And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back

A present, a great labour of the loom;

And therewithal an answer vague as wind:

Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that was true:

But then she had a will; was he to blame?

And maiden fancies; loved to live alone

Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood

With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:

The first, a gentleman of broken means

(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,

And almost my half-self, for still we moved

Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face

Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,

Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,

Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent

The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof

From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware

That he would send a hundred thousand men,

And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd

The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,

Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. 'My father, let me go.

It cannot be but some gross error lies

In this report, this answer of a king,

Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:

Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,

Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,

May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said:

'I have a sister at the foreign court,

Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,

Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,

The lady of three castles in that land:

Thro' her this matter might be
sifted clean.'
And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me
with you too.'
Then laughing 'what, if these
weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no
one near
To point you out the shadow from
the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better
in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here:'
but 'No!'
Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall
not; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden
fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the
council up.'

But when the council broke, I
rose and past
Thro' the wild woods that hung
about the town;
Found a still place, and pluck'd
her likeness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it
lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-
tassell'd trees:
What were those fancies? where-
fore break her troth?
Proud look'd the lips: but while
I meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon
the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers,
and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together; and
a Voice
Went with it, 'Follow, follow,
thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of
that month
Became her golden shield, I stole
from court
With Cyril and with Florian,
unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and
half in dread
To hear my father's clamour at
our backs

With Ho! from some bay-window
shake the night;
But all was quiet: from the
bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one,
we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier:
then we crost
To a livelier land; and so by tilth
and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of
wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick
with towers,
And in the imperial palace found
the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd
and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a
wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek
in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he
feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why
we came,
And my betroth'd. 'You do us,
Prince,' he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet
gem,
'All honour. We remember love
ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a
compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of
ceremony—
I think the year in which our
olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with
all my heart,
With my full heart: but there
were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady
Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out
of place
Maintaining that with equal hus-
bandry
The woman were an equal to the
man.
They harp'd on this; with this
our banquets rang;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in
 knots of talk;
 Nothing but this; my very ears
 were hot
 To hear them: knowledge, so
 my daughter held,
 Was all in all: they had but been,
 she thought,
 As children; they must lose the
 child, assume
 The woman: then, Sir, awful odes
 she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they
 treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful; odes
 About this losing of the child;
 and rhymes
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying
 change
 Beyond all reason: these the
 women sang;
 And they that know such things—
 I sought but peace;
 No critic I—would call them
 masterpieces:
 They master'd me. At last she
 begg'd a boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I
 have
 Hard by your father's frontier: I
 said no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it:
 and there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled;
 and more
 We know not,—only this: they
 see no men,
 Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor
 the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her,
 look upon her
 As on a kind of paragon; and I
 (Pardon me saying it) were much
 loth to breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine:
 but since
 (And I confess with right) you
 think me bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters
 to her;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate
 your chance
 Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;
 And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd
 to slur
 With garrulous ease and oily
 courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less
 (all frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my
 bride)
 Went forth again with both my
 friends. We rode
 Many a long league back to the
 North. At last
 From hills, that look'd across a
 land of hope,
 We dropt with evening on a
 rustic town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-
 curve,
 Close at the boundary of the
 liberties;
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd
 mine host
 To council, plied him with his
 richest wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters
 of the king.

He with a long low sibilation,
 stared
 As blank as death in marble; then
 exclaim'd
 Averring it was clear against all
 rules
 For any man to go: but as his
 brain
 Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he
 said,
 'Had given us letters, was he
 bound to speak?
 The king would bear him out;'
 and at the last—
 The summer of the vine in all his
 veins—
 'No doubt that we might make it
 worth his while.
 She once had past that way; he
 heard her speak;
 She scared him; life! he never saw
 the like;
 She look'd as grand as doomsday
 and as grave:
 And he, he revered his liege-
 lady there;

He always made a point to post
with mares;
His daughter and his housemaid
were the boys:
The land, he understood, for miles
about
Was till'd by women; all the swine
were sows,
And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which
I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three pre-
sented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high
tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my
father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase
female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a
sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laugh-
ter, help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden
plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly
bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our
good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liber-
ties.

We follow'd up the river as we
rode,
And rode till midnight when the
college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an
arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose
with wings
From four wing'd horses dark
against the stars;
And some inscription ran along
the front,
But deep in shadow: further on
we gain'd
A little street half garden and half
house;
But scarce could hear each other
speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver
hammers falling

On silver anvils, and the splash
and stir
Of fountains spouted up and
showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the
rose:
And all about us peal'd the
nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of
the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for
a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like
Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with con-
tinent,
Above an entry: riding in, we
call'd;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a
stable wench
Came running at the call, and
help'd us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth,
and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms
which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases
lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and
this,
And who were tutors. 'Lady
Blanche' she said,
'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was
prettiest,
Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche.'
'Hers are we,'
One voice, we cried; and I sat
down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of
corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring
East:

'Three ladies of the Northern em-
pire pray
Your Highness would enroll them
with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'
This I seal'd:
The seal was Cupid bent above a
scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus
hung,

And raised the blinding bandage
 from his eyes :
 I gave the letter to be sent with
 dawn ;
 And then to bed, where half in
 doze I seem'd
 To float about a glimmering night,
 and watch
 A full sea glazed with muffled
 moonlight, swell
 On some dark shore just seen that
 it was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
 We fell out, my wife and I,
 O we fell out I know not why,
 And kiss'd again with tears.
 And blessings on the falling out
 That all the more endears,
 When we fall out with those we love
 And kiss again with tears !
 For when we came where lies the child
 We lost in other years,
 There above the little grave,
 O there above the little grave.
 We kiss'd again with tears.

II

At break of day the College Port-
 ress came :
 She brought us Academic silks, in
 hue
 The lilac, with a silken hood to
 each,
 And zoned with gold ; and now
 when these were on,
 And we as rich as moths from dusk
 cocoons,
 She, curtseying her obeisance, let
 us know
 The Princess Ida waited : out we
 paced,
 I first, and following thro' the
 porch that sang
 All round with laurel, issued in a
 court
 Compact with lucid marbles,
 boss'd with lengths
 Of classic frieze, with ample awn-
 ings gay
 Betwixt the pillars, and with great
 urns of flowers.
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd
 in threes,
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in
 the midst ;

And here and there on lattice
 edges lay
 Or book or lute ; but hastily we
 past,
 And up a flight of stairs into the
 hall.

There at a board by tome and
 paper sat,
 With two tame leopards couch'd
 beside her throne,
 All beauty compass'd in a female
 form,
 The Princess ; liker to the inhabi-
 tant
 Of some clear planet close upon
 the Sun,
 Than our man's earth ; such eyes
 were in her head,
 And so much grace and power,
 breathing down
 From over her arch'd brows, with
 every turn
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her
 long hands,
 And to her feet. She rose her
 height, and said :

'We give you welcome : not
 without redound
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye
 come,
 The first-fruits of the stranger :
 aftertime,
 And that full voice which circles
 round the grave,
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up
 with me.
 What ! are the ladies of your land
 so tall ?'
 'We of the court' said Cyril.
 'From the court'
 She answer'd, 'then ye know the
 Prince ?' and he :
 'The climax of his age ! as tho'
 there were
 One rose in all the world, your
 Highness that,
 He worships your ideal :' she re-
 plied :
 'We scarcely thought in our own
 hall to hear
 This barren verbiage, current
 among men,

Light coin, the tinsel clink of
compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless
wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and
of power;
Your language proves you still the
child. Indeed,
We dream not of him: when we
set our hand
To this great work, we purposed
with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will
do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast
and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of
men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you
will,
You may with those self-styled
our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced,
scale with scale.'

At those high words, we con-
scious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an
officer
Rose up, and read the statutes,
such as these:
Not for three years to correspond
with home;
Not for three years to cross the
liberties;
Not for three years to speak with
any men;
And many more, which hastily
subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and
'Now' she cried,
'Ye are green wood, see ye warp
not. Look, our hall!
Our statues!—not of those that
men desire,
Sleek Odaliskues, or oracles of
mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or
East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to
rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian
wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,

The Rhodope, that built the
pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmy-
rene
That fought Aurelian, and the
Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these,
and lose
Convention, since to look on noble
forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous
organism
That which is higher. O lift your
natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out
your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a
fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the
slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and
spite
And slander, die. Better not be
at all
Than not be noble. Leave us:
you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will
harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week
before;
For they press in from all the
provinces,
And fill the hive.'
She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost
the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd
in,
There sat along the forms, like
morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on
the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she
herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-
wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded,
falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she
look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left,
a child,
In shining draperies, headed like
a star,

Her maiden babe, a double April
old,
Aglaia slept. We sat: the Lady
glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than
the dame
That whisper'd 'Asses' ears'
among the sedge,
'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all
that's fair,'
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and
she began.

'This world was once a fluid
haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the
starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheel-
ing cast
The planets: then the monster,
then the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad
in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing
down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles,
and here
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the un-
gracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom,
spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and
Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian,
Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state
in each,
How far from just; till warming
with her theme
She fulminated out her scorn of laws
Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd
on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came
to chivalry:
When some respect, however
slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the
dawn: a beam

Had slanted forward, falling in
a land
Of promise; fruit would follow.
Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who
first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of
prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom,
and assert
None lordlier than themselves but
that which made
Woman and man. She had
founded; they must build.
Here might they learn whatever
men were taught:
Let them not fear: some said
their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they
the least of men;
For often fineness compensated
size:
Besides the brain was like the
hand, and grew
With using; thence the man's, if
more was more;
He took advantage of his strength
to be
First in the field: some ages had
been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier and
her life
Was longer; and albeit their
glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet
since in truth
The highest is the measure of the
man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot,
Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers
of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam;
even so
With woman: and in arts of
government
Elizabeth and others; arts of
war
The peasant Joan and others;
arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any
man:
And, last not least, she who had
left her place,

And bow'd her state to them, that
they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from
the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future; 'every-
where
Two heads in council, two beside
the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of
the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to
sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the
mind :
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,
more :
And everywhere the broad and
bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of
those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the
blood of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd
us : the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced
welcome, she
Began to address us, and was
moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps,
all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her
throat, she cried
'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.'
'O,' she said,
'What do you here? and in this
dress? and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within
the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be
gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'
'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd.
'Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription
on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN
OF DEATH?'

'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who
could think
The softer Adams of your Aca-
deme,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were
such
As chanted on the blanching bones
of men?'
'But you will find it otherwise'
she said.
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-
tools! my vow
Binds me to speak, and O that
iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable,
our Head,
The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche,
take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a
grange
For warning: bury me beside
the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my
bones:
*Here lies a brother by a sister
slain,
All for the common good of woman-
kind.'*
'Let me die too,' said Cyril,
'having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche.'
I struck in :
'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love
the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the
Prince
Your countryman, affianced years
ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here
she was,
And thus (what other way was
left) I came.'
'O Sir, O Prince, I have no
country; none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er
I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted
here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may
not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how
should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the
thunderbolt

Hangs silent; but prepare: I
 speak; it falls.'
 'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that
 inscription there,
 I think no more of deadly lurks
 therein,
 Than in a clapper clapping in a
 garth,
 To scare the fowl from fruit: if
 more there be,
 If more and acted on, what
 follows? war;
 Your own work marr'd: for this
 your Academe,
 Whichever side be Victor, in the
 halloo
 Will topple to the trumpet down,
 and pass
 With all fair theories only made to
 gild
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the
 Princess judge
 Of that' she said: 'farewell, Sir
 —and to you.
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,'
 I rejoind,
 'The fifth in line from that old
 Florian,
 Yet hangs his portrait in my
 father's hall
 (The gaunt old Baron with his
 beetle brow
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty
 fights)
 As he bestrode my Grandsire,
 when he fell,
 And all else fled? we point to it,
 and we say,
 The loyal warmth of Florian is
 not cold,
 But branches current yet in
 kindred veins.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian
 added 'she
 With whom I sang about the
 morning hills,
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced
 the purple fly,
 And snared the squirrel of the
 glen? are you
 That Psyche, wont to bind my
 throbbing brow,

To smoothe my pillow, mix the
 foaming draught
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales,
 and read
 My sickness down to happy
 dreams? are you
 That brother-sister Psyche, both
 in one?
 You were that Psyche, but what
 are you now?'
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said,
 'for whom
 I would be that for ever which I
 seem,
 Woman, if I might sit beside your
 feet,
 And glean your scatter'd sapi-
 ence.'

Then once more,
 'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I
 began,
 'That on her bridal morn before
 she past
 From all her old companions,
 when the king
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared
 that ancient ties
 Would still be dear beyond the
 southern hills;
 That were there any of our people
 there
 In want or peril, there was one
 to hear
 And help them? look! for such
 are these and I.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian
 ask'd, 'to whom,
 In gentler days, your arrow-
 wounded fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside
 the well?
 The creature laid his muzzle on
 your lap,
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with
 it, and the blood
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and
 you wept.
 That was fawn's blood, not
 brother's, yet you wept.
 O by the bright head of my little
 niece,
 You were that Psyche, and what
 are you now?'

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said
again,
'The mother of the sweetest little
maid,
That ever crow'd for kisses.'

'Out upon it !'
She answer'd, 'peace ! and why
should I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion,
be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my
kind ?
Him you call great : he for the
common weal,
The fading politics of mortal
Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good
need were,
Slew both his sons : and I, shall
I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved
from right to save
A prince, a brother ? a little will
I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and
well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash !
I fear
My conscience will not count me
fleckless ; yet—
Hear my conditions : promise
(otherwise
You perish) as you came, to slip
away,
To-day, to-morrow, soon : it shall
be said,
These women were too barbarous,
would not learn ;
They fled, who might have shamed
us : promise, all.

What could we else, we promised
each ; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-
caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she
paused
By Florian ; holding out her lily
arms
Took both his hands, and smiling
faintly said :
'I knew you at the first : tho'
you have grown

You scarce have alter'd : I am
sad and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee
to death
My brother ! it was duty spoke,
not I.
My needful seeming harshness,
pardon it.
Our mother, is she well ?'
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment
after, clung
About him, and betwixt them
blossom'd up
From out a common vein of
memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases
of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious
dews
Began to glisten and to fall : and
while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing,
came a voice,
'I brought a message here from
Lady Blanche.'
Back started she, and turning
round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter
where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college
gown,
That clad her like an April
daffodilly
(Her mother's colour) with her
lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within
her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave
and float
In crystal currents of clear morn-
ing seas.

So stood that same fair creature
at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa
—you !
You heard us ?' and Melissa, 'O
pardon me !
I heard, I could not help it, did
not wish :
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear
me not,

Nor think I bear that heart within
 my breast,
 To give three gallant gentlemen
 to death.'
 'I trust you,' said the other, 'for
 we two
 Were always friends, none closer,
 elm and vine :
 But yet your mother's jealous
 temperament—
 Let not your prudence, dearest,
 drowse, or prove
 The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
 This whole foundation ruin, and
 I lose
 My honour, these their lives.'
 'Ah, fear me not'
 Replied Melissa; 'no—I would not
 tell,
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
 No, not to answer, Madam, all
 those hard things
 That Sheba came to ask of Solo-
 mon.'
 'Be it so' the other, 'that we still
 may lead
 The new light up, and culminate
 in peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba
 yet.'
 Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest
 man
 Feasted the woman wisest then,
 in halls
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should
 you
 (Tho', madam, *you* should answer,
we would ask)
 Less welcome find among us, if
 you came
 Among us, debtors for our lives
 to you,
 Myself for something more.' He
 said not what,
 But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go :
 we have been too long
 Together: keep your hoods about
 the face;
 They do so that affect abstraction
 here.
 Speak little; mix not with the
 rest; and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may
 yet be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took
 the child,
 And held her round the knees
 against his waist,
 And blew the swoll'n cheek of a
 trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them,
 smiling, and the child
 Push'd her flat hand against his
 face and laugh'd;
 And thus our conference closed.
 And then we stroll'd
 For half the day thro' stately
 theatres
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each
 we sat, we heard
 The grave Professor. On the
 lecture slate
 The circle rounded under female
 hands
 With flawless demonstration :
 follow'd then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thundrous Epic
 lilted out
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-
 words long
 That on the stretch'd forefinger
 of all Time
 Sparkle for ever: then we dipt
 in all
 That treats of whatsoever is, the
 state,
 The total chronicles of man, the
 mind,
 The morals, something of the
 frame, the rock,
 The star, the bird, the fish, the
 shell, the flower,
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the
 rest,
 And whatsoever can be taught and
 known;
 Till like three horses that have
 broken fence,
 And glutted all night long breast-
 deep in corn,
 We issued gorged with knowledge,
 and I spoke :
 'Why, Sirs, they do all this as
 well as we.'
 'They hunt old trails' said Cyril
 'very well;

But when did woman ever yet
invent ?' answer'd Florian,
'Ungracious !' have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture,
you that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and
almost sad ?'
'O trash' he said, 'but with a
kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who
made me wise ?
And learnt ? I learnt more from
her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an
empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science
in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in
these halls,
And round these halls a thousand
baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at
the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant
pang ; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger
boy,
The Head of all the golden-
shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a
Psyche too ;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher ;
and now
What think you of it, Florian ? do
I chase
The substance or the shadow ?
will it hold ?
I have no sorcerer's malison on
me,
No ghostly hauntings like his
Highness. I
Flatter myself that always every-
where
I know the substance when I see
it. Well,
Are castles shadows ? Three of
them ? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow ?
If not,
Shall those three castles patch my
tatter'd coat ?
For dear are those three castles to
my wants,

And dear is sister Psyche to my
heart,
And two dear things are one of
double worth,
And much I might have said, but
that my zone
Unmann'd me : then the Doctors !
O to hear
The Doctors ! O to watch the
thirsty plants
Imbibing ! once or twice I thought
to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my
mane : but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing
mimicry !
Make liquid treble of that bassoon,
my throat ;
Abase those eyes that ever loved
to meet
Star-sisters answering under cres-
cent brows ;
Abate the stride, which speaks of
man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this
cheek,
Where they like swallows coming
out of time
Will wonder why they came : but
hark the bell
For dinner, let us go !'
And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid
and still
By twos and threes, till all from
end to end
With beauties every shade of
brown and fair
In colours gayer than the morning
mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of
flowers.
How might a man not wander
from his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I
kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious
dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan
age,
Sat compass'd with professors :
they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to
and fro :

A clamour thicken'd, mixt with
 inmost terms
 Of art and science : Lady Blanche
 alone
 Of faded form and haughtiest
 lineaments,
 With all her autumn tresses falsely
 brown,
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a
 tiger-cat
 In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
 Concluded, and we sought the
 gardens : there
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and
 one

In this hand held a volume as to
 read,

And smoothed a petted peacock
 down with that :

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop
 by,

Or under arches of the marble bridge
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat :
 some hid and sought

In the orange thickets : others
 tost a ball

Above the fountain-jets, and back
 again

With laughter : others lay about
 the lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd
 that their May

Was passing : what was learning
 unto them ?

They wish'd to marry ; they could
 rule a house ;

Men hated learned women : but
 we three

Sat muffled like the Fates ; and
 often came

Melissa hitting all we saw with
 shafts

Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
 That harm'd not : then day

droopt ; the chapel bells
 Call'd us : we left the walks ; we

mixt with those
 Six hundred maidens clad in

purest white,
 Before two streams of light from

wall to wall,
 While the great organ almost

burst his pipes,

Groaning for power, and rolling
 thro' the court

A long melodious thunder to the
 sound

Of solemn psalms, and silver
 litanies,

The work of Ida, to call down from
 Heaven

A blessing on her labours for the
 world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,

Wind of the western sea,

Low, low, breathe and blow,

Wind of the western sea !

Over the rolling waters go,

Come from the dying moon, and blow,

Blow him again to me ;

While my little one, while my pretty
 one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,

Father will come to thee soon ;

Rest, rest, on mother's breast,

Father will come to thee soon ;

Father will come to his babe in the nest

Silver sails all out of the west

Under the silver moon :

Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty
 one, sleep.

III

Morn in the white wake of the
 morning star

Came furrowing all the orient into
 gold.

We rose, and each by other drest
 with care

Descended to the court that lay
 three parts

In shadow, but the Muses' heads
 were touch'd

Above the darkness from their
 native East.

There we stood beside the fount,
 and watch'd

Or seem'd to watch the dancing
 bubble, approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from
 lack of sleep,

Or grief, and glowing round her
 dewy eyes

The circled Iris of a night of
 tears ;

'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while
 yet you may !

My mother knows : ' and when I
 ask'd her 'how,'

'My fault' she wept 'my fault!
 and yet not mine:
 Yet mine in part. O hear me,
 pardon me.
 My mother, 'tis her wont from
 night to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her
 side.
 She says the Princess should have
 been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two
 arms;
 And so it was agreed when first
 they came;
 But Lady Psyche was the right
 hand now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom
 used;
 Hers more than half the students,
 all the love.
 And so last night she fell to can-
 vass you:
Her countrywomen! she did not
 envy her.
 "Who ever saw such wild bar-
 barians?
 Girls?—more like men!" and at
 these words the snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within
 my breast;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but
 my cheek
 Began to burn and burn, and her
 lynx eye
 To fix and make me hotter, till
 she laugh'd:
 "O marvellously modest maiden,
 you!
 Men! girls, like men! why, if
 they had been men
 You need not set your thoughts in
 rubric thus
 For wholesale comment." Pardon,
 I am shamed
 That I must needs repeat for my
 excuse
 What looks so little graceful:
 "men" (for still
 My mother went revolving on the
 word)
 "And so they are,—very like men
 indeed—
 And with that woman closeted
 for hours!"

Then came these dreadful words
 out one by one,
 "Why—these—*are*—men:" I
 shudder'd: "and you know
 it."
 "O ask me nothing," I said:
 "And she knows too,
 And she conceals it." So my
 mother clutch'd
 The truth at once, but with no
 word from me;
 And now thus early risen she goes
 to inform
 The Princess: Lady Psyche will
 be crush'd;
 But you may yet be saved, and
 therefore fly:
 But heal me with your pardon ere
 you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa,
 for a blush?'
 Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush
 again: than wear
 Those lilies, better blush our lives
 away.
 Yet let us breathe for one hour
 more in Heaven'
 He added, 'lest some classic Angel
 speak
 In scorn of us, "They mounted,
 Ganymedes,
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second
 morn."
 But I will melt this marble into wax
 To yield us farther furlough:'
 and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,
 and thought
 He scarce would prosper. 'Tell
 us,' Florian ask'd,
 'How grew this feud betwixt the
 right and left.'
 'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt
 these two
 Division smoulders hidden; 'tis
 my mother,
 Too jealous, often fretful as the
 wind
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear
 with her:
 I never knew my father, but she
 says

(God help her) she was wedded to
 a fool;
 And still she rail'd against the
 state of things.
 She had the care of Lady Ida's
 youth,
 And from the Queen's decease she
 brought her up.
 But when your sister came she
 won the heart
 Of Ida: they were still together,
 grew
 (For so they said themselves)
 inosculated;
 Consonant chords that shiver to
 one note;
 One mind in all things: yet my
 mother still
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her
 theories,
 And angled with them for her
 pupil's love:
 She calls her plagiarist; I know
 not what:
 But I must go: I dare not tarry,
 and light,
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she
 fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing
 after her:
 'An open-hearted maiden, true
 and pure.
 If I could love, why this were she:
 how pretty
 Her blushing was, and how she
 blush'd again,
 As if to close with Cyril's random
 wish:
 Not like your Princess cramm'd
 with erring pride,
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she
 drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter
 of the crane,
 The dove may murmur of the
 dove, but I
 An eagle clang an eagle to the
 sphere.
 My princess, O my princess!
 true she errs,
 But in her own grand way: being
 herself

Three times more noble than three
 score of men,
 Shesees herself in every woman else,
 And so she wears her error like a
 crown
 To blind the truth and me: for
 her, and her,
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia,
 mix
 The nectar; but—ah she—
 whene'er she moves
 The Samian Herè rises and she
 speaks
 A Memnon smitten with the
 morning Sun.'

So saying from the court we
 paced, and gain'd
 The terrace ranged along the
 Northern front,
 And leaning there on those balus-
 ters, high
 Above the empurpled champaign,
 drank the gale
 That blown about the foliage
 underneath,
 And sated with the innumerable
 rose,
 Beat balm upon our eyelids.
 Hither came
 Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,'
 he cried;
 'No fighting shadows here! I
 forced a way
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd
 and gnarl'd.
 Better to clear prime forests,
 heave and thump
 A league of street in summer
 solstice down,
 Than hammer at this reverend
 gentlewoman.
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd;
 found her there
 At point to move, and settled in
 her eyes
 The green malignant light of
 coming storm.
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase
 well-oil'd,
 As man's could be; yet maiden-
 meek I pray'd
 Concealment: she demanded who
 we were,

And why we came? I fabled
 nothing fair,
 But, your example pilot, told her
 all.
 Up went the hush'd amaze of
 hand and eye.
 But when I dwelt upon your old
 affiance,
 She answer'd sharply that I
 talk'd astray.
 I urged the fierce inscription on
 the gate,
 And our three lives. True—we
 had limed ourselves
 With open eyes, and we must take
 the chance.
 But such extremes, I told her, well
 might harm
 The woman's cause. "Not more
 than now," she said,
 "So puddled as it is with favourit-
 ism."
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame
 might befall
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she
 knew:
 Her answer was "Leave me to deal
 with that."
 I spoke of war to come and many
 deaths,
 And she replied, her duty was to
 speak,
 And duty duty, clear of conse-
 quences.
 I grew discouraged, Sir; but since
 I knew
 No rock so hard but that a little
 wave
 May beat admission in a thousand
 years,
 I recommenced; "Decide not ere
 you pause.
 I find you here but in the second
 place,
 Some say the third—the authentic
 foundress you.
 I offer boldly: we will seat you
 highest:
 Wink at our advent: help my
 prince to gain
 His rightful bride, and here I
 promise you
 Some palace in our land, where
 you shall reign

The head and heart of all our fair
 she-world.
 And your great name flow on with
 broadening time
 For ever." Well, she balanced
 this a little,
 And told me she would answer us
 to-day,
 Meantime be mute: thus much,
 nor more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message
 from the Head.
 'That afternoon the Princess rode
 to take
 The dip of certain strata to the
 North.
 Would we go with her? we should
 find the land
 Worth seeing; and the river made
 a fall
 Out yonder: ' then she pointed on
 to where
 A double hill ran up his furrowy
 forks
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans
 of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on
 thro' all
 Its range of duties to the ap-
 pointed hour.
 Then summon'd to the porch we
 went. She stood
 Among her maidens, higher by
 the head,
 Her back against a pillar, her foot
 on one
 Of those tame leopards. Kitten-
 like he roll'd
 And paw'd about her sandal. I
 drew near;
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange
 seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our
 house:
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow
 show,
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fan-
 tasy,
 Her college and her maidens,
 empty masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a
 dream,

For all things were and were not.
 Yet I felt
 My heart beat thick with passion
 and with awe;
 Then from my breast the involun-
 tary sigh
 Brake, as she smote me with the
 light of eyes
 That lent my knee desire to kneel,
 and shook
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
 Went forth in long retinue follow-
 ing up
 The river as it narrow'd to the
 hills.

I rode beside her and to me she
 said :
 'O friend, we trust that you es-
 teem'd us not
 Too harsh to your companion
 yesternorn;
 Unwillingly we spake.' 'No—not
 to her,'
 I answer'd, 'but to one of whom
 we spake
 Your Highness might have seem'd
 the thing you say.'
 'Again?' she cried, 'are you am-
 bassadresses
 From him to me? we give you,
 being strange,
 A license: speak, and let the topic
 die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—
 could have wish'd—
 'Our king expects—was there no
 precontract?
 There is no truer-hearted—ah, you
 seem
 All he prefigured, and he could not
 see
 The bird of passage flying south
 but long'd
 To follow: surely, if your Highness
 keep
 Your purport, you will shock him
 ev'n to death,
 Or baser courses, children of de-
 spair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not
 read—no books?

Quoit, tennis, ball—no games?
 nor deals in that
 Which men delight in, martial
 exercise?
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
 Methinks he seems no better than
 a girl;
 As girls were once, as we ourself
 have been:
 We had our dreams; perhaps he
 mixt with them:
 We touch on our dead self, nor
 shun to do it,
 Being other—since we learnt our
 meaning here,
 To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
 Upon an even pedestal with
 man.'

She paused, and added with a
 haughtier smile
 'And as to precontracts, we move,
 my friend,
 At no man's beck, but know our-
 self and thee,
 O Vashti, noble Vashti! Sum-
 mon'd out
 She kept her state, and left the
 drunken king
 To brawl at Shushan underneath
 the palms.'

'Alas your Highness breathes
 full East,' I said,
 'On that which leans to you. I
 know the Prince,
 I prize his truth: and then how
 vast a work
 To assail this grey preëminence of
 man!
 You grant me license; might I
 use it? think;
 Ere half be done perchance your
 life may fail;
 Then comes the feeblèr heiress of
 your plan,
 And takes and ruins all; and thus
 your pains
 May only make that footprint
 upon sand
 Which old-recurring waves of
 prejudice
 Resmooth to nothing: might I
 dread that you,

With only Fame for spouse and
your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain,
and miss,

Meanwhile, what every woman
counts her due,
Love, children, happiness ?'

And she exclaim'd,
'Peace you young savage of the
Northern wild !

What ! tho' your Prince's love
were like a God's,

Have we not made ourself the
sacrifice ?

You are bold indeed : we are not
talk'd to thus :

Yet will we say for children, would
they grew

Like field-flowers everywhere ! we
like them well :

But children die ; and let me tell
you, girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds
cannot die ;

They with the sun and moon
renew their light

For ever, blessing those that look
on them.

Children—that men may pluck
them from our hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with
ourselves—

O—children—there is nothing
upon earth

More miserable than she that has
a son

And sees him err : nor would we
work for fame ;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the
applause of Great,

Who learns the one *POU STO*
whence after-hands

May move the world, tho' she
herself effect

But little : wherefore up and act,
nor shrink

For fear our solid aim be dissipa-
ted

By frail successors. Would, in-
deed, we had been,

In lieu of many mortal flies, a
race

Of giants living, each, a thousand
years,

That we might see our own work
out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into
stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in
myself

If that strange Poet-princess with
her grand

Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting
my thoughts :

'No doubt we seem a kind of
monster to you ;

We are used to that : for women,
up till this

Cramp'd under worse than South-
sea-isle taboo,

Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so
far

In high desire, they know not,
cannot guess

How much their welfare is a pas-
sion to us.

If we could give them surer,
quicker proof—

Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by
single act

Of immolation, any phase of
death,

We were as prompt to spring
against the pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters'

liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble
tear ;

And up we came to where the
river sloped

To plunge in cataract, shattering
on black blocks

A breadth of thunder. O'er it
shook the woods,

And danced the colour, and,
below, stuck out

The bones of some vast bulk that
lived and roar'd

Before man was. She gazed
awhile and said,

'As these rude bones to us, are we
to her

That will be.' 'Dare we dream of
that,' I ask'd,
'Which wrought us, as the work-
man and his work,
That practice betters?' 'How,'
she cried, 'you love
The metaphysics! read and earn
our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an
emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought
to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on
her:
For there are schools for all.' 'And
yet' I said
'Methinks I have not found among
them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought
of that,'
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us
not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our
maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve
the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments
of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human
heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with
shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we
know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this
matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casu-
alty,
Nor willing men should come
among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we
came,
This craft of healing. Were you
sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your
question now,
Which touches on the workman
and his work.
Let there be light and there was
light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are
but is;

And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that
are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now
this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought
to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession:
thus
Our weakness somehow shapes
the shadow, Time;
But in the shadow will we work,
and mould
The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a
league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood
crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the
crag,
Full of beauty. 'O how sweet' I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my
mask)
'To linger here with one that
loved us.' 'Yea,'
She answer'd, 'or with fair philo-
sophies
That lift the fancy; for indeed
these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Ely-
sian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old,
and saw
The soft white vapour streak the
crowned towers
Built to the Sun:' then, turning
to her maids,
'Pitch our pavilion here upon the
sward;
Lay out the viands.' At the
word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately
wrought
With fair Cœnna's triumph; here
she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-
cheek,
The woman-conquerer; woman-
conquer'd there
The bearded Victor of ten thou-
sand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his
side: but we

Set forth to climb; then, climbing,
 Cyril kept
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian,
 I
 With mine affianced. Many a
 little hand
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine
 on the rocks,
 Many a light foot shone like a
 jewel set
 In the dark crag: and then we
 turn'd, we wound
 About the cliffs, the copses, out
 and in,
 Hammering and clinking, chat-
 tering stony names
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and
 trap and tuff,
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the
 Sun
 Grew broader toward his death
 and fell, and all
 The rosy heights came out above
 the lawns.

The splendour falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the
 lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in
 glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
 flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying,
 dying, dying.
 O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly
 blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens reply-
 ing:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying,
 dying, dying.
 O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
 flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying
 dying.

IV

'There sinks the nebulous star
 we call the Sun,
 If that hypothesis of theirs be
 sound'
 Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;'
 and we

Down from the lean and wrinkled
 precipices,
 By every coppice-feather'd chasm
 and cleft,
 Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom
 to where below
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone
 the tent
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once
 she lean'd on me,
 Descending; once or twice she lent
 her hand,
 And blissful palpitations in the
 blood,
 Stirring a sudden transport rose
 and fell.

But when we planted level feet,
 and dipt
 Beneath the satin dome and en-
 ter'd in,
 There leaning deep in broider'd
 down we sank
 Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
 A fragrant flame rose, and before
 us glow'd
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,
 and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to
 us: lightlier move
 The minutes fledged with music: '
 and a maid,
 Of those beside her, smote her
 harp, and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what
 they mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine
 despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the
 eyes,
 In looking on the happy Autumn-
 fields
 And thinking of the days that are no
 more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering
 on a sail,
 That brings our friends up from the
 underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the
 verge;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no
 more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark
 summer dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd
 birds
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes

The casement slowly grows a glimmer-
ing square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are
no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after
death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy
feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as
love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all
regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no
more.'

She ended with such passion
that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an
erring pearl
Lost in her bosom : but with some
disdain
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed
there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the
Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal
to men,
Well needs it we should cram our
ears with wool
And so pace by : but thine are fan-
cies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old by-
gones be,
While down the streams that float
us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering
bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten
on the waste
Becomes a cloud : for all things
serve their time
Toward that great year of equal
mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws,
in the end
Found golden : let the past be
past; let be
Their cancell'd Babels : tho' the
rough kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild
figtree split
Their monstrous idols, care not
while we hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing
news
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning
eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow : ' then
to me;
'Know you no song of your own
land,' she said,
'Not such as moans about the re-
trospect,
But deals with the other distance
and the hues
Of promise; not a death's-head at
the wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself
had made,
What time I watch'd the swallow
winging south
From mine own land, part made
long since, and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike
as far
As I could ape their treble, did I
sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying
South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded
eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to
thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that
knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the
South,
And dark and true and tender is the
North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could
follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million
loves.

'O were I thou that she might take
me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her
heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her
heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods
are green ?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood
is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the
South,
But in the North long since my nest
is made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is
 long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the
 North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the
 South.
 'O Swallow, flying from the golden
 woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and
 make her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'
 I ceased, and all the ladies, each
 at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
 time,
 Stared with great eyes, and
 laugh'd with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant;
 for still my voice
 Rang false: but smiling 'Not for
 thee,' she said,
 'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
 Shall burst her veil: marsh-
 divers, rather, maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the
 meadow-crake
 Grate her harsh kindred in the
 grass: and this
 A mere love-poem! O for such,
 my friend,
 We hold them slight: they mind
 us of the time
 When we made bricks in Egypt.
 Knaves are men,
 That lute and flute fantastic ten-
 derness,
 And dress the victim to the offer-
 ing up,
 And paint the gates of Hell with
 Paradise,
 And play the slave to gain the
 tyranny.
 Poor soul! I had a maid of
 honour once;
 She wept her true eyes blind for
 such a one,
 A rogue of canzonets and seren-
 ades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her.
 She is dead.
 So they blaspheme the muse! But
 great is song
 Used to great ends: ourself have
 often tried
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm
 have dash'd

The passion of the prophetess; for
 song
 Is duer unto freedom, force and
 growth
 Of spirit than to junketing and
 love.
 Love is it? Would this same
 mock-love, and this
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like
 winter bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our
 worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty
 babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,
 and sphered
 Whole in ourselves and owed to
 none. Enough!
 But now to leaven play with profit,
 you,
 Know you no song, the true
 growth of your soil,
 That gives the manners of your
 countrywomen?'

She spoke and turn'd her sump-
 tuous head with eyes
 Ofshining expectation fixt on mine.
 Then while I dragg'd my brains
 for such a song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-
 mouth'd glass had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport,
 began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-
 catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange ex-
 periences
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
 at him,
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and
 wann'd and shook;
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her
 brows;
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried;
 'Forbear, Sir' I;
 And heated thro' and thro' with
 wrath and love,
 I smote him on the breast; he
 started up;
 There rose a shriek as of a city
 sack'd;
 Melissa clamour'd 'Flee the
 death'; 'To horse,'

Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and
 fled, as flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart
 the dusk,
 When some one batters at the
 dovecote doors,
 Disorderly the women. Alone I
 stood
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext
 at heart,
 In the pavilion: there like parting
 hopes
 I heard them passing from me:
 hoof by hoof,
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then
 another shriek,
 'The Head, the Head, the Prin-
 cess, O the Head!'
 For blind with rage she miss'd the
 plank, and roll'd
 In the river. Out I sprang from
 glow to gloom:
 There whirl'd her white robe like
 a blossom'd branch
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance
 I gave,
 No more; but woman-vested as I
 was
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet
 I caught her; then
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in
 my left
 The weight of all the hopes of half
 the world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain.
 A tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place
 and stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the
 gurgling wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we
 drove and caught,
 And grasping down the boughs I
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glim-
 meringly group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching
 forward drew
 My burthen from mine arms; they
 cried 'she lives!'
 They bore her back into the tent:
 but I,

So much a kind of shame within
 me wrought,
 Not yet endured to meet her
 opening eyes,
 Nor found my friends; but push'd
 alone on foot
 (For since her horse was lost I left
 her mine)
 Across the woods, and less from
 Indian craft
 Than beelike instinct hiveward,
 found at length
 The garden portals. Two great
 statues, Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt
 were valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter
 rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but
 his brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches
 thereupon
 Spread out at top, and grimly
 spiked the gates.

A little space was left between
 the horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at
 top with pain,
 Dropt on the sward, and up the
 linden walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that
 changed from hue to hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm,
 now the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear
 had wheel'd
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow
 suns.

A step
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the
 uncertain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if
 this were she,'
 But it was Florian. 'Hist O Hist,'
 he said,
 'They seek us: out so late is out
 of rules.
 Moreover "seize the strangers"
 is the cry.
 How came you here?' I told him:
 'I' said he,

'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at
 heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the
 rest
 With hooded brows I crept into
 the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith,
 underneath
 The head of Holofernes peep'd
 and saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial :
 each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us :
 last of all,
 Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied
 her.
 She, question'd if she knew us
 men, at first
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it
 not :
 And then, demanded if her mother
 knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or
 denied :
 From whence the Royal mind,
 familiar with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She
 sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there ;
 she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from
 the doors ;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her
 face to face ;
 And I slipt out : but whither will
 you now ?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril ?
 both are fled :
 What, if together ? that were
 not so well.
 Would rather we had never come !
 I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of
 the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong
 him more than I
 That struck him : this is proper
 to the clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and
 purpled, still the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him,
 and to shame

That which he says he loves : for
 Cyril, howe'er
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—
 the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd
 in grosser lips
 Beyond all pardon—as it is, I
 hold
 These flashes on the surface are
 not he.
 He has a solid base of tempera-
 ment :
 But as the waterlily starts and
 slides
 Upon the level in little puffs of
 wind,
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom,
 such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from
 a tamarisk near
 Two Proctors leapt upon us,
 crying, 'Names :'
 He, standing still, was clutch'd ;
 but I began
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes,
 wind
 And double in and out the boles,
 and race
 By all the fountains : fleet I was
 of foot :
 Before me shower'd the rose in
 flakes ; behind
 I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at
 mine ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heed-
 ed not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my
 soul.
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a
 vine,
 That claspt the feet of a Mne-
 mosyne,
 And falling on my face was caught
 and known.

They haled us to the Princess
 where she sat
 High in the hall : above her
 droop'd a lamp,
 And made the single jewel on her
 brow
 Burn like the mystic fire on a
 mast-head,

Prophet of storm : a handmaid on
each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out
her long black hair
Damp from the river; and close
behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough,
stronger than men,
Huge women blowz'd with health,
and wind, and rain,
And labour. Each was like a
Druid rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands
apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd
about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd
dividing clove
An advent to the throne : and
there beside,
Half-naked as if caught at once
from bed
And tumbled on the purple foot-
cloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the
left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up
from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken
with her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche
erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent
orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in
old days :
You prized my counsel, lived upon
my lips :
I led you then to all the Casta-
lies;
I fed you with the milk of every
Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and
you me
Your second mother : those were
gracious times.
Then came your new friend : you
began to change—
I saw it and grieved—to slacken
and to cool;
Till taken with her seeming open-
ness

You turn'd your warmer currents
all to her,
To me you froze : this was my
meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient
love,
And partly that I hoped to win
you back,
And partly conscious of my own
deserts,
And partly that you were my civil
head,
And chiefly you were born for
something great,
In which I might your fellow-
worker be,
When time should serve; and thus
a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long
since had sown;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's
gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden
sun :
We took this palace; but even
from the first
You stood in your own light and
darken'd mine.
What student came but that you
planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so
wise,
A foreigner, and I your country-
woman,
I your old friend and tried, she
new in all ?
But still her lists were swell'd and
mine were lean;
Yet I bore up in hope she would
be known :
Then came these wolves : *they*
knew her : *they* endured,
Long-closeted with her the yester-
morn,
To tell her what they were, and
she to hear :
And me none told : not less to an
eye like mine,
A lidless watcher of the public
weal,
Last night, their mask was patent,
and my foot
Was to you : but I thought again :
I fear'd

To meet a cold "We thank you,
 we shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche:" you had
 gone to her,
 She told, perforce; and winning
 easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, re-
 main'd among us
 In our young nursery still un-
 known, the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while
 my honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant
 haste
 To push my rival out of place and
 power.
 But public use required she should
 be known;
 And since my oath was ta'en for
 public use,
 I broke the letter of it to keep the
 sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but
 watch'd them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mis-
 chief done;
 And yet this day (tho' you should
 hate me for it).
 I came to tell you; found that you
 had gone,
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise:
 now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak; if not,
 then I:
 Did she? These monsters bla-
 zon'd what they were,
 According to the coarseness of
 their kind,
 For this I hear; and known at
 last (my work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty
 shame,
 I grant in her some sense of
 shame, she flies;
 And I remain on whom to wreak
 your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build
 up yours,
 I that have wasted here health,
 wealth, and time,
 And talents, I—you know it—I
 will not boast:
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your
 plan,

Divorced from my experience, will
 be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men
 will say
 We did not know the real light,
 but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no
 foot can tread.'

She ceased: the Princess an-
 swer'd coldly, 'Good:
 Your oath is broken: we dismiss
 you: go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to
 the child)
 Our mind is changed: we take it
 to ourself.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a
 vulture throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a
 haggard smile.
 'The plan was mine. I built the
 nest' she said,
 'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!'
 and stoop'd to updrag
 Melissa: she, half on her mother
 propt,
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her
 face, and cast
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
 Which melted Florian's fancy as
 she hung,
 A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
 Appealing to the bolts of Heaven;
 and while
 We gazed upon her came a little
 stir
 About the doors, and on a sudden
 rush'd
 Among us, out of breath, as one
 pursued,
 A woman-post in flying raiment.
 Fear
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her
 face, and wing'd
 Her transit to the throne, whereby
 she fell
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which
 the Head
 Took half-amazed, and in her
 lion's mood
 Tore open, silent we with blind
 surmise

Regarding, while she read, till
 over brow
 And cheek and bosom brake the
 wrathful bloom
 As of some fire against a stormy
 cloud,
 When the wild peasant rights
 himself, the rick
 Flames, and his anger reddens in
 the heavens;
 For anger most it seem'd, while
 now her breast,
 Beaten with some great passion
 at her heart,
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and
 we heard
 In the dead hush the papers that
 she held
 Rustle : at once the lost lamb at
 her feet
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its
 dam;
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ;
 she crush'd
 The scrolls together, made a
 sudden turn
 As if to speak, but, utterance
 failing her,
 She whirl'd them on to me, as
 who should say
 'Read,' and I read—two letters—
 one her sire's.

'Fair daughter, when we sent
 the Prince your way
 We knew not your ungracious
 laws, which learnt,
 We, conscious of what temper you
 are built,
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong,
 but fell
 Into his father's hands, who has
 this night,
 You lying close upon his terri-
 tory,
 Slipt round and in the dark
 invested you,
 And here he keeps me hostage for
 his son.'

The second was my father's
 running thus :
 'You have our son : touch not a
 hair of his head :

Render him up unscathed : give
 him your hand :
 Cleave to your contract : tho'
 indeed we hear
 You hold the woman is the better
 man ;
 A rampant heresy, such as if it
 spread
 Would make all women kick
 against their Lords
 Thro' all the world, and which
 might well deserve
 That we this night should pluck
 your palace down ;
 And we will do it, unless you send
 us back
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'
 So far I read ;
 And then stood up and spoke
 impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your
 reserve,
 But led by golden wishes, and a
 hope
 The child of regal compact, did
 I break
 Your precinct ; not a scorner of
 your sex
 But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be : hear me,
 for I bear,
 Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er
 your wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the grey
 lock a life
 Less mine than yours : my nurse
 would tell me of you ;
 I babbled for you, as babies for
 the moon,
 Vague brightness ; when a boy,
 you stoop'd to me
 From all high places, lived in all
 fair lights,
 Came in long breezes rapt from
 inmost south
 And blown to inmost north ; at
 eve and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the
 woods ;
 The leader wildswan in among the
 stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in
 wreaths of glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd
 Ida. Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you,
 had you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the
 enthroned
 Persephone in Hades, now at
 length,
 Those winters of abeyance all
 worn out,
 A man I came to see you : but,
 indeed,
 Not in this frequency can I lend
 full tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts
 that wait
 On you, their centre : let me say
 but this,
 That many a famous man and
 woman, town
 And landskip, have I heard of,
 after seen
 The dwarfs of presage : tho' when
 known, there grew
 Another kind of beauty in de-
 tail
 Made them worth knowing ; but
 in you I found
 My boyish dream involved and
 dazzled down
 And master'd, while that after-
 beauty makes
 Such head from act to act, from
 hour to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay
 me here,
 According to your bitter statute-
 book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as
 they say
 The seal does music ; who desire
 you more
 Than growing boys their man-
 hood ; dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left
 to do,
 The breath of life ; O more than
 poor men wealth,
 Than sick men health—yours,
 yours, not mine—but half
 Without you ; with you, whole ;
 and of those halves
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you
 block and bar

Your heart with system out from
 mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse
 despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd
 antagonisms
 To follow up the worthiest till he
 die :
 Yet that I came not all un-
 authorized
 Behold your father's letter.'
 On one knee
 Kneeling, I gave it, which she
 caught, and dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of
 fierce
 Invective seem'd to wait behind
 her lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the
 world with foam :
 And so she would have spoken, but
 there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the
 maids
 Gather'd together : from the il-
 lumined hall
 Long lanes of splendour slanted
 o'er a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as
 herded ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and
 gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads ; they
 to and fro
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm,
 some red, some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to
 the light,
 Some crying there was an army in
 the land,
 And some that men were in the
 very walls,
 And some they cared not ; till a
 clamour grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-
 built,
 And worse - confounded : high
 above them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking
 peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head :
 but rising up

Robed in the long night of her
 deep hair, so
 To the open window moved, re-
 maining there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above
 the waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-
 rolling eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on
 the light
 Dash themselves dead. She
 stretch'd her arms and
 call'd
 Across the tumult and the tumult
 fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am
 not I your Head?
 On me, me, me, the storm first
 breaks: I dare
 All these male thunderbolts: what
 is it ye fear?
 Peace! there are those to avenge
 us and they come:
 If not,—myself were like enough,
 O girls,
 To unfurl the maiden banner of
 our rights,
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of
 war,
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our
 cause,
 Die: yet I blame you not so much
 for fear;
 Six thousand years of fear have
 made you that
 From which I would redeem you:
 but for those
 That stir this hubbub—you and
 you—I know
 Your faces there in the crowd—
 to-morrow morn
 We hold a great convention: then
 shall they
 That love their voices more than
 duty, learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in
 shame to live
 No wiser than their mothers,
 household stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each
 other's fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for
 the clown,

The drunkard's football, laughing-
 stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands
 and in their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance,
 to thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish,
 and to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools
 abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands:
 thereat the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a
 smile, that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the
 cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in
 azure gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to
 us and said:

'You have done well and like a
 gentleman,
 And like a prince: you have our
 thanks for all:
 And you look well too in your
 woman's dress:
 Well have you done and like a
 gentleman.
 You saved our life: we owe you
 bitter thanks:
 Better have died and spilt our
 bones in the flood—
 Then men had said—but now—
 What hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on
 you both?—
 Yet since our father—Wasps in
 our good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the
 light to be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your
 native bears—
 O would I had his sceptre for one
 hour!
 You that have dared to break our
 bound, and gull'd
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and
 thwarted us—
 I wed with thee! I bound by pre-
 contract
 Your bride, your bonds slave! not
 tho' all the gold

That veins the world were pack'd
to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should
lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are
hateful to us :
I trample on your offers and on
you :
Begone : we will not look upon you
more.
Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daugh-
ters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us
and address'd
Their motion : twice I sought to
plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their
heavy hands,
The weight of destiny : so from her
face
They push'd us, down the steps,
and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us
out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd
a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the
lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I
listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and
the doubt :
I seem'd to move among a world of
ghosts ;
The Princess with her monstrous
woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side
by side,
The cataract and the tumult and
the kings
Were shadows ; and the long fan-
tastic night
With all its doings had and had
not been,
And all things were and were
not.

This went by
As strangely as it came, and on
my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melan-
choly ;

Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite
of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I
was one
To whom the touch of all mis-
chance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight,
Norway sun
Set into sunrise ; then we moved
away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands ;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands :
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee ;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and
thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her
half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury
thro' the words ;
And, after, feigning pique at what
she call'd
The rallery, or grotesque, or false
sublime—
Like one that wishes at a dance to
change
The music—clapt her hands and
cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and
make an end :
And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue,
said,
'Sir Ralph has got your colours :
if I prove
Your knight and fight your battle,
what for me ?'
It chanced, her empty glove upon
the tomb
Lay by her like a model of her
hand.
She took it and she flung it.
'Fight' she said,
'And make us all we would be,
great and good.'
He knightlike in his cap instead
of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the
hall,
Arranged the favour, and as-
sumed the Prince.

v

Now, scarce three paces measured
 from the mound,
 We stumbled on a stationary
 voice,
 And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two
 from the palace' I.
 'The second two: they wait,' he
 said, 'pass on;
 His Highness wakes:' and one,
 that clash'd in arms,
 By glimmering lanes and walls of
 canvas, led
 Threading the soldier-city, till we
 heard
 The drowsy folds of our great
 ensign shake
 From blazon'd lions o'er the
 imperial tent
 Whispers of war.
 Entering, the sudden light
 Dazed me half-blind: I stood and
 seem'd to hear,
 As in a poplar grove when a light
 wind wakes
 A lisp of the innumerable leaf
 and dies,
 Each hissing in his neighbour's
 ear; and then
 A strangled titter, out of which
 there brake
 On all sides, clamouring etiquette
 to death,
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the
 two old kings
 Began to wag their baldness up
 and down,
 The fresh young captains flash'd
 their glittering teeth,
 The huge bush-bearded Barons
 heaved and blew,
 And slain with laughter roll'd the
 gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough
 cheek wet with tears,
 Panted from weary sides 'King,
 you are free!
 We did but keep you surety for
 our son,
 If this be he,—or a draggled maw-
 kin, thou,
 That tends her bristled grunners in
 the sludge:'

For I was drench'd with ooze, and
 torn with briers,
 More crumpled than a poppy from
 the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from
 head to heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his
 vaulted palm
 A whisper'd jest to some one near
 him, 'Look,
 He has been among his shadows.'
 'Satan take
 The old women and their shadows!
 (thus the King
 Roar'd) make yourself a man to
 fight with men.
 Go: Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink
 From ferule and the trespass-
 chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient in a
 trice
 From what was left of faded
 woman-slough
 To sheathing splendours and the
 golden scale
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that
 now
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of
 the Earth,
 And hit the Northern hills. Here
 Cyril met us,
 A little shy at first, but by and
 by
 We twain, with mutual pardon
 ask'd and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd
 peace, whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled
 away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in
 the night
 Had come on Psyche weeping:
 'then we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there
 she lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
 A stone-shot off: we enter'd in,
 and there
 Among piled arms and rough
 accoutrements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's
 cloak,

Like some sweet sculpture draped
 from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from
 its pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground
 she lay :
 And at her head a follower of the
 camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of
 womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by
 the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come'
 he whisper'd to her,
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister :
 lie not thus.
 What have you done but right ?
 you could not slay
 Me, nor your prince : look up :
 be comforted :
 Sweet is it to have done the thing
 one ought,
 When fall'n in darker ways.'
 And likewise I :
 'Be comforted : have I not lost
 her too,
 In whose least act abides the
 nameless charm
 That none has else for me ?' She
 heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice ; and
 up she sat,
 And raised the cloak from brows
 as pale and smooth
 As those that mourn half-shrouded
 over death
 In deathless marble. 'Her,' she
 said, 'my friend—
 Parted from her—betray'd her
 cause and mine—
 Where shall I breathe ? why kept
 ye not your faith ?
 O base and bad ! what comfort ?
 none for me !'
 To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet
 I pray
 Take comfort : live, dear lady,
 for your child !'
 At which she lifted up her voice
 and cried.

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom,
 ah my child,

My one sweet child, whom I shall
 see no more !
 Fornow will cruel I da keep her back ;
 And either she will die from want
 of care,
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when
 they say
 The child is hers—for every little
 fault,
 The child is hers ; and they will
 beat my girl
 Remembering her mother : O my
 flower !
 Or they will take her, they will
 make her hard,
 And she will pass me by in after-life
 With some cold reverence worse
 than were she dead.
 Ill mother that I was to leave her
 there,
 To lag behind, scared by the cry
 they made,
 The horror of the shame among
 them all :
 But I will go and sit beside the
 doors,
 And make a wild petition night
 and day,
 Until they hate to hear me like a
 wind
 Wailing for ever, till they open to
 me,
 And lay my little blossom at my
 feet,
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my
 one child :
 And I will take her up and go my
 way,
 And satisfy my soul with kissing
 her :
 Ah ! what might that man not
 deserve of me,
 Who gave me back my child ?'
 'Be comforted,'
 Said Cyril, 'you shall have it :'
 but again
 She veil'd her brows, and prone
 she sank, and so
 Like tender things that being
 caught feign death,
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
 Thro' all the camp and inward
 raced the scouts

With rumour of Prince Arac hard
at hand.

We left her by the woman, and
without

Found the grey kings at parle :
and 'Look you' cried

My father 'that our compact be
fulfill'd :

You have spoilt this child ; she
laughs at you and man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and
me, and him :

But red-faced war has rods of
steel and fire ;

She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me :
'We fear, indeed, you spent a
stormy time

With our strange girl : and yet
they say that still

You love her. Give us, then,
your mind at large :

How say you, war or not ?'

'Not war, if possible,
O king,' I said, 'lest from the
abuse of war,

The desecrated shrine, the tram-
pled year,

The smouldering homestead, and
the household flower

Torn from the lintel—all the
common wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I
loom to her

Three times a monster : now she
lightens scorn

At him that mars her plan, but
then would hate

(And every voice she talk'd with
ratify it,

And every face she look'd on
justify it)

The general foe. More soluble
is this knot,

By gentleness than war. I want
her love.

What were I nigher this altho' we
dash'd

Your cities into shards with
catapults,

She would not love ;—or brought
her chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is
my lord,

Not ever would she love ; but
brooding turn

The book of scorn, till all my little
chance

Were caught within the record of
her wrongs,

And crush'd to death : and rather,
Sire, than this

I would the old God of war him-
self were dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with

ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth

bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake
My father, 'Tut, you know them
not, the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I
almost think

That idiot legend credible. Look
you, Sir !

Man is the hunter ; woman is his
game :

The sleek and shining creatures of
the chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of
their skins ;

They love us for it, and we ride
them down.

Wheedling and siding with them !
Out ! for shame !

Boy, there's no rose that's half so
dear to them

As he that does the thing they
dare not do,

Breathing and sounding beaute-
ous battle, comes

With the air of the trumpet round
him, and leaps in

Among the women, snares them
by the score

Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'
dash'd with death

He reddens what he kisses : thus
I won

Your mother, a good mother, a
good wife,

Worth winning ; but this firebrand
—gentleness

To such as her ! if Cyril spake her
true,

To catch a dragon in a cherry net,

To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea but Sire,' I cried,
'Wild natures need wise curbs.

The soldier? No:

What dares not Ida do that she
should prize

The soldier? I beheld her, when
she rose

The yesternight, and storming in
extremes

Stood for her cause, and flung de-
fiance down

Gagelike to man, and had not
shunn'd the death,

No, not the soldier's: yet I hold
her, king,

True woman: but you clash them
all in one,

That have as many differences as
we.

The violet varies from the lily as
far

As oak from elm: one loves the
soldier, one

The silken priest of peace, one this,
one that,

And some unworthily; their sin-
less faith,

A maiden moon that sparkles on
a sty,

Glorifying clown and satyr; whence
they need

More breadth of culture: is not
Ida right?

They worth it? truer to the law
within?

Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influ-
ences

Of earth and heaven? and she of
whom you speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some
serene

Creation minted in the golden
moods

Of sovereign artists; not a thought,
a touch,

But pure as lines of green that
streak the white

Of the first snowdrop's inner
leaves; I say,

Not like the piebald miscellany,
man,

Bursts of great heart and slips in
sensual mire,

But whole and one: and take them
all-in-all,

Were we ourselves but half as
good, as kind,

As truthful, much that Ida claims
as right

Had ne'er been mooted, but as
frankly theirs

As dues of Nature. To our point:
not war:

Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'
Said Gama. 'We remember love

ourselves

In our sweet youth; we did not
rate him then

This red-hot iron to be shaped
with blows.

You talk almost like Ida: *she* can
talk;

And there is something in it as
you say:

But you talk kindlier: we esteem
you for it.—

He seems a gracious and a gallant
Prince,

I would he had our daughter: for
the rest,

Our own detention, why, the
causes weigh'd,

Fatherly fears—you used us cour-
teously—

We would do much to gratify your
Prince—

We pardon it; and for your ingress
here

Upon the skirt and fringe of our
fair land,

You did but come as goblins in
the night,

Nor in the furrow broke the
ploughman's head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd
the milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl
of cream:

But let your Prince (our royal
word upon it,

He comes back safe) ride with us
to our lines,

And speak with Arac: Arac's word
is thrice

As ours with Ida : something may
be done—
I know not what—and ours shall
see us friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if
so you will,
Follow us : who knows ? we four
may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my
sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in
his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave
to go.

Then rode we with the old king
across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand
rings of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valen-
tines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale
of love
In the old king's ears, who pro-
mised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as
we rode ;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the
heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with
each light air
On our mail'd heads : but other
thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the
embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince,
trampling the flowers
With clamour : for among them
rose a cry
As if to greet the king ; they made
a halt ;
The horses yell'd ; they clash'd
their arms ; the drum
Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the
martial fife ;
And in the blast and bray of the
long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, un-
dulated
The banner : anon to meet us
lightly pranced

Three captains out ; nor ever had
I seen
Such thews of men : the midmost
and the highest
Was Arac : all about his motion
clung
The shadow of his sister, as the
beam
Of the East, that play'd upon
them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy
Giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the
frosty dark ;
And as the fiery Sirius alters
hue,
And bickers into red and emerald,
shone
Their morions, wash'd with morn-
ing, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when
first I heard
War music, felt the blind wild-
beast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a
man,
Stir in me as to strike : then took
the king
His three broad sons ; with now
a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told
them all :
A common light of smiles at our
disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the
windy jest
Had labour'd down within his
ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd
himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst
out in words.

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath !
and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills
not war :
And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care
I, war or no ?
But then this question of your
troth remains :
And there's a downright honest
meaning in her ;

She flies too high, she flies too
 high! and yet
 She ask'd but space and fairplay
 for her scheme;
 She prest and prest it on me—I
 myself,
 What know I of these things?
 but, life and soul!
 I thought her half-right talking of
 her wrongs;
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath!
 what of that?
 I take her for the flower of woman-
 kind,
 And so I often told her, right or
 wrong,
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to
 those she loves,
 And, right or wrong, I care not:
 this is all,
 I stand upon her side: she made
 me swear it—
 'Sdeath—and with solemn rites
 by candle-light—
 Swear by St. something—I forget
 her name—
 Her that talk'd down the fifty
 wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I
 swore.
 Come, this is all; she will not:
 waive your claim:
 If not, the foughten field, what
 else, at once
 Decides it, 'sdeath! against my
 father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer loth to
 render up
 My precontract, and loth by
 brainless war
 To cleave the rift of difference
 deeper yet;
 Till one of those two brothers,
 half aside
 And fingering at the hair about his
 lip,
 To prick us on to combat 'Like
 to like!
 The woman's garment hid the
 woman's heart.'
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose
 like a blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-
 scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd
 upon the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to
 their shame,
 'Decide it here: why not? we
 are three to three.'

Then spake the third 'But
 three to three? no more?
 No more, and in our noble sister's
 cause?
 More, more, for honour: every
 captain waits
 Hungry for honour, angry for his
 king.
 More, more, some fifty on a side,
 that each
 May breathe himself, and quick!
 by overthrow
 Of these or those, the question
 settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild
 wreath of air,
 This flake of rainbow flying on the
 highest
 Foam of men's deeds—this honour,
 if ye will.
 It needs must be for honour if at
 all:
 Since, what decision? if we fail,
 we fail,
 And if we win, we fail: she would
 not keep
 Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we
 will send to her,'
 Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why
 she should
 Bide by this issue: let our missive
 thro',
 And you shall have her answer by
 the word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king,
 but vainlier than a hen
 To her false daughters in the pool;
 for none
 Regarded; neither seem'd there
 more to say:
 Back rode we to my father's camp,
 and found

He thrice had sent a herald to the
 gates,
 To learn if Ida yet would cede our
 claim,
 Or by denial flush her babbling
 wells
 With her own people's life : three
 times he went :
 The first, he blew and blew, but
 none appear'd :
 He batter'd at the doors ; none
 came : the next,
 An awful voice within had warn'd
 him thence :
 The third, and those eight daugh-
 ters of the plough
 Came sallying thro' the gates, and
 caught his hair,
 And so belabour'd him on rib and
 cheek
 They made him wild : not less one
 glance he caught
 Thro' open doors of Ida station'd
 there
 Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
 firm
 Tho' compass'd by two armies and
 the noise
 Of arms ; and standing like a
 stately pine
 Set in a cataract on an island-
 crag,
 When storm is on the heights, and
 right and left
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the
 long hills roll
 The torrents, dash'd to the vale :
 and yet her will
 Bred will in me to overcome it or
 fall.

But when I told the king that I
 was pledged
 To fight in tourney for my bride,
 he clash'd
 His iron palms together with a cry ;
 Himself would tilt it out among
 the lads :
 But overborne by all his bearded
 lords
 With reasons drawn from age and
 state, perforce
 He yielded, wroth and red, with
 fierce demur :

And many a bold knight started
 up in heat,
 And sware to combat for my claim
 till death.

All on this side the palace ran
 the field
 Flat to the garden-wall : and like-
 wise here,
 Above the garden's glowing blos-
 som-belts,
 A column'd entry shone and
 marble stairs,
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd
 with Tomyris
 And what she did to Cyrus after
 fight,
 But now fast barr'd : so here upon
 the flat
 All that long morn the lists were
 hammer'd up,
 And all that morn the heralds to
 and fro,
 With message and defiance, went
 and came ;
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal
 hand
 But shaken here and there, and
 rolling words
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I
 read.

'O brother, you have known the
 pangs we felt,
 What heats of indignation when
 we heard
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their
 women's feet ;
 Of lands in which at the altar the
 poor bride
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-
 gift a scourge ;
 Of living hearts that crack within
 the fire
 Where smoulder their dead des-
 pots ; and of those,—
 Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity,
 fling
 Their pretty maids in the running
 flood, and swoops
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the
 heart
 Made for all noble motion : and I
 saw

That equal baseness lived in
 sleeker times
 With smother men: the old
 leaven leaven'd all:
 Millions of throats would bawl for
 civil rights,
 No woman named: therefore I set
 my face
 Against all men, and lived but for
 mine own.
 Far off from men I built a fold for
 them:
 I stored it full of rich memorial:
 I fenced it round with gallant
 institutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts
 of prey,
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy
 boys
 Brake on us at our books, and
 marr'd our peace,
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering
 I know not what
 Of insolence and love, some pre-
 text held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
 Seal'd not the bond—the strip-
 lings!—for their sport!—
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not
 tame these?
 Or you? or I? for since you think
 me touch'd
 In honour—what, I would not
 aught of false—
 Is not our cause pure? and where-
 as I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what
 mother's blood
 You draw from, fight; you failing,
 I abide
 What end soever: fail you will
 not. Still
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for
 my own;
 His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er
 you do,
 Fight and fight well; strike and
 strike home. O dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel
 guards you, you
 The sole men to be mingled with
 our cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the
 after-time,

Your very armour hallow'd, and
 your statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly
 brush'd aside,
 We plant a solid foot into the
 Time,
 And mould a generation strong to
 move
 With claim on claim from right to
 right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with chil-
 dren's, know herself;
 And Knowledge in our own land
 make her free,
 And, ever following those two
 crowned twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower
 the fiery grain
 Of freedom broadcast over all that
 orbs
 Between the Northern and the
 Southern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd
 across the rest.
 'See that there be no traitors in
 your camp:
 We seem a nest of traitors—none
 to trust
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-
 plague of men!
 Almost our maids were better at
 their homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here:
 indeed I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little
 child
 Of one unworthy mother; which
 she left:
 She shall not have it back: the
 child shall grow
 To prize the authentic mother of
 her mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own
 bed
 This morning: there the tender
 orphan hands
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to
 charm from thence
 The wrath I nursed against the
 world: farewell.'

I ceased; he said: 'Stubborn,
 but she may sit

Upon a king's right hand in
 thunder-storms,
 And breed up warriors ! See now,
 tho' yourself
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
 sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the
 spindling king,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy
 tolerance.
 When the man wants weight, the
 woman takes it up,
 And topples down the scales; but
 this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base
 of all;
 Man for the field and woman for
 the hearth :
 Man for the sword and for the
 needle she :
 Man with the head and woman
 with the heart :
 Man to command and woman to
 obey ;
 All else confusion. Look you !
 the grey mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny
 shrills
 From tile to scullery, and her
 small Goodman
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the
 fires of Hell
 Mix with his hearth : but you—
 she's yet a colt—
 Take, break her : strongly groom'd
 and straitly curb'd
 She might not rank with those
 detestable
 That let the bantling scald at
 home, and brawl
 Their rights or wrongs like pot-
 herbs in the street.
 They say she's comely; there's
 the fairer chance :
 I like her none the less for rating
 at her !
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
 But suffers change of frame. A
 lusty brace
 Of twins may weed her of her folly.
 Boy,
 The bearing and the training of a
 child
 Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king :
 I took my leave, for it was nearly
 noon :
 I pored upon her letter which I held,
 And on the little clause 'take not
 his life :'
 I mused on that wild morning in
 the woods,
 And on the 'Follow, follow, thou
 shalt win :'
 I thought on all the wrathful king
 had said,
 And how the strange betrothment
 was to end :
 Then I remember'd that burnt
 sorcerer's curse
 That one should fight with shadow
 and should fall ;
 And like a flash the weird affection
 came :
 King, camp and college turn'd to
 hollow shows ;
 I seem'd to move in old memorial
 tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten
 ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a
 dream :
 And ere I woke it was the point of
 noon,
 The lists were ready. Empano-
 plied and plumed
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty
 there
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet
 blared
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a
 land
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once
 more
 The trumpet, and again : at which
 the storm
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the
 ridge of spears
 And riders front to front, until
 they closed
 In conflict with the crash of
 shivering points,
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a
 dream, I dream'd
 Of fighting. On his haunches rose
 the steed,
 And into fiery splinters leapt the
 lance,

And out of stricken helmets sprang
the fire.
Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but
kept their seats :
Part roll'd on the earth and rose
again and drew :
Part stumbled mixt with floundering
horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's
side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's
flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and
everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the
ringing lists,
And all the plain,—brand, mace,
and shaft, and shield—
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging
anvil bang'd
With hammers ; till I thought, can
this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if
this be so,
The mother makes us most—and
in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the
palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and
ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues,
statue-like,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a
Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida
watching us,
A single band of gold about her
hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven :
but she
No saint—inexorable—no tender-
ness—
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees
me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall ! with that
I drave
Among the thickest and bore down
a Prince,
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make
my dream
All that I would. But that large-
moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a
wake,

Made at me thro' the press, and,
staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse
and horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up
the drains,
And shadowing down the cham-
paign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks,
and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a
roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsman cry ; for
everything
Gave way before him : only
Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own
right eye,
Thrust in between ; but Arac rode
him down :
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against
the Prince,
With Psyche's colour round his
helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt
at arms ;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he
that smote
And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I
felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment
hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to
horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted ; the
blade glanced ;
I did but shear a feather, and
dream and truth
Flow'd from me ; darkness closed
me ; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead :
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe ;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face ;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee—
 Like summer tempest came her tears—
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

VI

My dream had never died or lived
 again.

As in some mystic middle state I
 lay;

Seeing I saw not, hearing not I
 heard:

Tho' if I saw not, yet they told
 me all

So often that I speak as having
 seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said
 to me,

That all things grew more tragic
 and more strange;

That when our side was van-
 quish'd and my cause

For ever lost, there went up a
 great cry,

The Prince is slain. My father
 heard and ran

In on the lists, and there unlaced
 my casque

And grovell'd on my body, and
 after him

Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida
 stood

With Psyche's babe in arm: there
 on the roofs

Like that great dame of Lapidoth
 she sang.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n:
 the seed,

The little seed they laugh'd at in the
 dark,

Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown
 a bulk

Of spanless girth, that lays on every
 side

A thousand arms and rushes to the
 Sun.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n:
 they came;

The leaves were wet with women's
 tears: they heard

A noise of songs they would not
 understand:

They mark'd it with the red cross to
 the fall,

And would have strown it, and are
 fall'n themselves.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n:
 they came,

The woodmen with their axes: lo the
 tree!

But we will make it faggots for the
 hearth,

And shape it plank and beam for roof
 and floor,

And boats and bridges for the use of
 men.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n:
 they struck;

With their own blows they hurt them-
 selves, nor knew

There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
 The glittering axe was broken in their

arms,
 Their arms were shatter'd to the

shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this
 shall grow

A night of Summer from the heat, a
 breadth

Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power;
 and roll'd

With music in the growing breeze of
 Time,

The tops shall strike from star to star,
 the fangs

Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our
 sanctuary

Is violate, our laws broken: fear
 we not

To break them more in their be-
 hoof, whose arms

Champion'd our cause and won it
 with a day

Blanch'd in our annals, and per-
 petual feast,

When dames and heroines of the
 golden year

Shall strip a hundred hollows bare
 of Spring,

To rain an April of ovation
 round

Their statues, borne aloft, the
 three: but come,

We will be liberal, since our rights
 are won.

Let them not lie in the tents with
 coarse mankind,

Ill nurses; but descend, and prof-
 fer these

The brethren of our blood and
 cause, that there

Lie bruised and maim'd, the ten-
 der ministries

Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe
 yet in her arms,
 Descending, burst the great bronze
 valves, and led
 A hundred maids in train across
 the Park.
 Some cowl'd, and some bare-
 headed, on they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest :
 by them went
 The enamour'd air sighing, and on
 their curls
 From the high tree the blossom
 wavering fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles
 of light
 Slided, they moving under shade :
 but Blanche
 At distance follow'd : so they
 came : anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they
 wound
 Timorously ; and as the leader of
 the herd
 That holds a stately fretwork to
 the Sun,
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy
 does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as
 on air,
 Thelovely, lordly creature floated on
 To where her wounded brethren
 lay ; there stay'd ;
 Knelt on one knee,—the child on
 one,—and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear
 deliverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal
 names,
 And said 'You shall not lie in the
 tents but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you
 fought, and served
 With female hands and hospi-
 tality.'

Then, whether moved by this,
 or was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started
 from my side
 The old lion, glaring with his
 whelpless eye,
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying
 stark,

Dishelm'd and mute, and motion-
 lessly pale,
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and
 when she saw
 The haggard father's face and
 reverend beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with
 the blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a
 twitch of pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her
 forehead past
 A shadow, and her hue changed,
 and she said :
 'He saved my life : my brother
 slew him for it.'
 No more : at which the king in
 bitter scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting
 and the tress
 And held them up : she saw them,
 and a day
 Rose from the distance on her
 memory,
 When the good Queen, her mother,
 shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady
 Blanche :
 And then once more she look'd at
 my pale face :
 Till understanding all the foolish
 work
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of
 all,
 Her iron will was broken in her
 mind ;
 Her noble heart was molten in her
 breast ;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the
 earth : she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and
 presently
 'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives : he
 is not dead :
 O let me have him with my
 brethren here
 In our own palace : we will tend
 on him
 Like one of these ; if so, by any
 means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks,
 that make
 Our progress falter to the woman's
 goal.'

She said: but at the happy
 word 'he lives'
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er
 my wounds.
 So those two foes above my fallen
 life,
 With brow to brow like night and
 evening mixt
 Their dark and grey, while Psyche
 ever stole
 A little nearer, till the babe that
 by us,
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and
 golden brede,
 Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on
 the grass,
 Uncared for, spied its mother and
 began
 A blind and babbling laughter, and
 to dance
 Its body, and reach its fatling
 innocent arms
 And lazy lingering fingers. She
 the appeal
 Brook'd not, but clamouring out
 'Mine—mine—not yours,
 It is not yours, but mine: give
 me the child'
 Ceased all on tremble: piteous
 was the cry:
 So stood the unhappy mother
 open-mouth'd,
 And turn'd each face her way:
 wan was her cheek
 With hollow watch, her blooming
 mantle torn,
 Red grief and mother's hunger in
 her eye,
 And down dead-heavy sank her
 curls, and half
 The sacred mother's bosom, pant-
 ing, burst
 The laces toward her babe; but
 she nor cared
 Nor knew it, clamouring on, till
 Ida heard,
 Look'd up, and rising slowly
 from me, stood
 Erect and silent, striking with her
 glance
 The mother, me, the child; but he
 that lay
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he
 was,

Trail'd himself up on one knee:
 then he drew
 Her robe to meet his lips, and
 down she look'd
 At the arm'd man sideways,
 pitying, as it seem'd,
 Or self-involved; but when she
 learnt his face,
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song,
 arose
 Once more thro' all her height, and
 o'er him grew
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the
 sand
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine,
 and he said:

 'O fair and strong and terrible!
 Lioness
 That with your long locks play the
 Lion's mane!
 But Love and Nature, these are
 two more terrible
 And stronger. See, your foot is on
 our necks,
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of
 your will.
 What would you more? give her
 the child! remain
 Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let
 you be:
 Win you the hearts of women; and
 beware
 Lest, where you seek the common
 love of these,
 The common hate with the re-
 volving wheel
 Should drag you down, and some
 great Nemesis
 Break from a darken'd future,
 crown'd with fire,
 And tread you out for ever: but
 howsoe'er
 Fix'd in yourself, never in your
 own arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers
 to her,
 Give her the child! O if, I say,
 you keep
 One pulse that beats true woman,
 if you loved
 The breast that fed or arm that
 dandled you,

Or own one part of sense not flint
to prayer,
Give her the child ! or if you scorn
to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt
with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her
one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that
could not kill,
Give *me* it : *I* will give it her.'

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation
roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after
sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mel-
lowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it :
'Pretty bud !
Lily of the vale ! half open'd bell
of the woods !
Sole comfort of my dark hour,
when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken
system made
No purple in the distance, mys-
tery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine,
farewell ;
These men are hard upon us as of
old,
We two must part : and yet how
fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in
mine, to think
I might be something to thee,
when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my
barren breast
In the dead prime : but may thy
mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false
to me !
And, if thou needs must bear the
yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom'—here she
kiss'd it : then—
'All good go with thee ! take it
Sir,' and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-
mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche
as she sprang

To meet it, with an eye that swum
in thanks ;
Then felt it sound and whole from
head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it
close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and
mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it ; after
that
Put on more calm and added sup-
pliantly :

'We two were friends : I go to
mine own land
For ever : find some other : as for
me
I scarce am fit for your great
plans : yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part
forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon
the child.
Then Arac. 'Ida—'sdeath ! you
blame the man ;
You wrong yourselves—the woman
is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace
to me !
I am your warrior : I and mine
have fought
Your battle : kiss her ; take her
hand, she weeps :
'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight
thrice o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on
the ground,
And reddening in the furrows of
his chin,
And moved beyond his custom,
Garna said :

'I've heard that there is iron in
the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word ?
not one ?
Whence drew you this steel tem-
per ? not from me,
Not from your mother now a saint
with saints.
She said you had a heart—I heard
her say it—

"Our Ida has a heart"—just ere
 she died—
 "But see that some one with au-
 thority
 Be near her still" and I—I sought
 for one—
 All people said she had autho-
 rity—
 The Lady Blanche: much profit!
 Not one word;
 No! tho' your father sues: see
 how you stand
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good
 knights maim'd,
 I trust that there is no one hurt to
 death,
 For your wild whim: and was it
 then for this,
 Was it for this we gave our palace
 up,
 Where we withdrew from summer
 heats and state,
 And had our wine and chess be-
 neath the planes,
 And many a pleasant hour with
 her that's gone,
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it
 kind?
 Speak to her I say: is this not she
 of whom,
 When first she came, all flush'd
 you said to me
 Now had you got a friend of your
 own age,
 Now could you share your thought;
 now should men see
 Two women faster welded in one
 love
 Than pairs of wedlock; she you
 walk'd with, she
 You talk'd with, whole nights
 long, up in the tower,
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and
 azimuth,
 And right ascension, Heaven
 knows what; and now
 A word, but one, one little kindly
 word,
 Not one to spare her: out upon
 you, flint!
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any;
 nay,
 You shame your mother's judg-
 ment too. Not one?

You will not? well—no heart have
 you, or such
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut
 Have fretted all to dust and bitter-
 ness.
 So said the small king moved
 beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke,
 drain'd of her force
 By many a varying influence and
 so long.
 Down thro' her limbs a drooping
 languor wept:
 Her head a little bent; and on her
 mouth
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a
 clouded moon
 In a still water: then brake out
 my sire,
 Lifting his grim head from my
 wounds. 'O you,
 Woman, whom we thought woman
 even now,
 And were half fool'd to let you
 tend our son,
 Because he might have wish'd it—
 but we see
 The accomplice of your madness
 unforgetting,
 And think that you might mix his
 draught with death,
 When your skies change again:
 the rougher hand
 Is safer: on to the tents: take up
 the Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was
 prick'd to attend
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that
 dimm'd her broke
 A genial warmth and light once
 more, and shone
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad
 friend.

'Come hither,
 O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace
 me, come,
 Quick while I melt; make recon-
 cilement sure
 With one that cannot keep her
 mind an hour:
 Come to the hollow heart they
 slander so!

Kiss and be friends, like children
being chid !

I seem no more : *I* want forgive-
ness too :

I should have had to do with none
but maids,

That have no links with men. Ah
false but dear,

Dear traitor, too much loved,
why ?—why ?—Yet see,

Before these kings we embrace
you yet once more

With all forgiveness, all obli-
vion,

And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O Sire,

Grant me your son, to nurse, to
wait upon him,

Like mine own brother. For my
debt to him,

This nightmare weight of grati-
tude, I know it ;

Taunt me no more : yourself and
yours shall have

Free adit ; we will scatter all our
maids

Till happier times each to her
proper hearth :

What use to keep them here—
now ? grant my prayer.

Help, father, brother, help ; speak
to the king :

Thaw this male nature to some
touch of that

Which kills me with myself, and
drags me down

From my fixt height to mob me
up with all

The soft and milky rabble of
womankind,

Poor weakling ev'n as they are.'

Passionate tears

Follow'd : the king replied not :
Cyril said :

'Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—
ask for him

Of your great head—for he is
wounded too—

That you may tend upon him with
the prince.'

'Ay so,' said *Ida* with a bitter
smile,

'Our laws are broken : let him
enter too.'

Then *Violet*, she that sang the
mournful song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the
plain,

Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,'
she said,

'I stagger in the stream : I cannot
keep

My heart an eddy from the brawl-
ing hour :

We break our laws with ease, but
let it be.'

'Ay so ?' said *Blanche* : 'Amazed
am I to hear

Your Highness : but your High-
ness breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not
make : 'twas I.

I had been wedded wife, *I* knew
mankind,

And block'd them out ; but these
men came to woo

Your Highness—verily *I* think to
win.

So she, and turn'd askance a
wintry eye :

But *Ida* with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a

trembling tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief
and scorn.

'Fling our doors wide ! all, all,
not one, but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's
soul,

Whatever man lies wounded,
friend or foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our
girls flit,

Till the storm die ! but had you
stood by us,

The roar that breaks the *Pharos*
from his base

Had left us rock. She fain would
sting us too,

But shall not. Pass, and mingle
with your likes.

We brook no further insult but
are gone.'

She turn'd ; the very nape of
her white neck

Was rosed with indignation : but
the Prince
Her brother came; the king her
father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words :
nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave
his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead
weights, and bare
Straight to the doors : to them
the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry
shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron
heels :
And on they moved and gain'd
the hall, and there
Rest'd : but great the crush was,
and each base,
To left and right, of those tall
columns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the
swarm
Of female whisperers : at the
further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two
great cats
Close by her, like supporters on
a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear : but in
the centre stood
The common men with rolling
eyes ; amazed
They glared upon the women,
and aghast
The women stared at these, all
silent, save
When armour clash'd or jingled,
while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the
hall, and shot
A flying splendour out of brass
and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from
head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the
helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon
on flame,
And now and then an echo started
up,

And shuddering fled from room
to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
And me they bore up the broad
stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a
hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from
sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness ;
left me in it ;
And others elsewhere they laid ;
and all
That afternoon a sound arose of
hoof
And chariot, many a maiden
passing home
Till happier times ; but some were
left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords
out and in,
From those two hosts that lay
beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will, and every-
thing was changed.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw
the sea ;
The cloud may stoop from heaven
and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of
cape ;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd
thee ?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should
I give
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :
Yet, O my friend, I will not have
thee die !

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee
live ;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are
seal'd
I strove against the stream and all
in vain :
Let the great river take me to the
main :

No more, dear love, for at a touch I
yield ;

Ask me no more.

VII

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to
hospital ;
At first with all confusion : by and by

Sweet order lived again with other laws :
 A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere
 Low voices with the ministering hand
 Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they talk'd,
 They sang, they read : till she not fair, began
 To gather light, and she that was, became
 Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro
 With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
 Like creatures native unto gracious act,
 And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
 And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
 Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ; but oft
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
 On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
 Darkening her female field : void was her use ;
 And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
 O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
 And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
 Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;
 So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down she came,
 And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by morn the lark
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :
 And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-grown the bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft,
 Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left
 Her child among us, willing she should keep
 Court-favour : here and there the small bright head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
 To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
 The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon
 He rose up whole, and those fair charities
 Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
 To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd

At first with Psyche. Not tho'
 Blanche had sworn
 That after that dark night among
 the fields
 She needs must wed him for her
 own good name;
 Not tho' he built upon the babe
 restored;
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded
 she, but fear'd
 To incense the Head once more;
 till on a day
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came
 behind
 Seen but of Psyche: on her foot
 she hung
 A moment, and she heard, at
 which her face
 A little flush'd, and she past on;
 but each
 Assumed from thence a half-
 consent involved
 In stillness, plighted troth, and
 were at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the
 sacred halls
 Held carnival at will, and flying
 struck
 With showers of random sweet on
 maid and man.
 Nor did her father cease to press
 my claim,
 Nor did mine own now reconciled;
 nor yet
 Did those twin brothers, risen
 again and whole;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft
 she sat:
 Then came a change; for some-
 times I would catch
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe
 it hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and
 shriek
 'You are not Ida;' clasp it
 once again,
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her
 not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,
 And call her hard and cold which
 seem'd a truth:

And still she fear'd that I should
 lose my mind,
 And often she believed that I
 should die:
 Till out of long frustration of her
 care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-
 weary noons,
 And watches in the dead, the
 dark, when clocks
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace
 floors, or call'd
 On flying Time from all their
 silver tongues—
 And out of memories of her kind-
 lier days,
 And sidelong glances at my
 father's grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in
 heart—
 And out of hauntings of my spoken
 love,
 And lonely listenings to my
 mutter'd dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless
 hands,
 And wordless broodings on the
 wasted cheek—
 From all a closer interest flourish'd
 up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and
 last, to these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell
 hung with tears
 By some cold morning glacier;
 frail at first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd colour day
 by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh
 close to death
 For weakness: it was evening:
 silent light
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein
 were wrought
 Two grand designs; for on one
 side arose
 The women up in wild revolt,
 and storm'd
 At the Oppian law. Titanic
 shapes, they cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among
 the rest

A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On
the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax;
behind.
A train of dames: by axe and
eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn
in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-nulc curdled
in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before
them paused
Hortensia, pleading: angry was
her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not
where I was:
They did but look like hollow
shows; nor more
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she
sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all
her shape
And rounder seem'd: I moved:
I sigh'd: a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears
upon my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity
ran
Mine down my face, and with
what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all
unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest,
to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns towa him,
I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd
whisperingly:

'If you be, what I think you,
some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil
yourself:
But if you be that Ida whom I
knew,
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall
die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me
ere I die.'

I could no more, but lay like
one in trance,

That hears his burial talk'd of by
his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor
make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She
turn'd; she paused;
She stoop'd; and out of languor
leapt a cry;
Leapt fiery Passion from the
brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living
world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the
lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine
arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame;
and all
Her falsar self slipt from her like
a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in
her mood
Than in her mould that other,
when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all
with love;
And down the streaming crystal
dropt; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-
sides,
Naked, a double light in air and
wave,
To meet her Graces, where they
deck'd her out
For worship without end; nor
end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute
she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I
sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love,
a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she,
near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones,
she read.

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now
the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace
walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry
font:
The firefly wakens: waken thou with
me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock
like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the earth all Danaë to the
stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and
leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in
me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness
up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake :
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and
slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she
found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low,
she read :

'Come down, O maid, from yonder
mountain heights :

What pleasure lives in height (the
shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendour of
the hills ?

But cease to move so near the Heavens,
and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;
And come, for Love is of the valley,
come,

For Love is of the valley, come thou
down

And find him ; by the happy threshold,
he,

Or hand in hand with Plenty in the
maize,

Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to
walk

With Death and Morning on the silver
horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white
ravine,

Nor find him dropt upon the firths of
ice,

That huddling slant in furrow-cloven
falls

To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee
down

To find him in the valley ; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and
leave

The monstrous ledges there to slope,
and spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling
water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air :
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all
the vales

Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every
sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is
sweet ;

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the
lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned ; while with
shut eyes I lay

Listening ; then look'd. Pale was
the perfect face ;

The bosom with long sighs la-
bour'd ; and meek

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the
luminous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the
hand. She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she
had fail'd

In sweet humility ; had fail'd in
all ;

That all her labour was but as a
block

Left in the quarry ; but she still
were loth,

She still were loth to yield herself
to one

That wholly scorn'd to help their
equal rights

Against the sons of men, and
barbarous laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their
cause from her

That wrong'd it, sought far less
for truth than power

In knowledge : something wild
within her breast,

A greater than all knowledge,
beat her down.

And she had nursed me there from
week to week :

Much had she learnt in little time.
In part

It was ill counsel had misled the
girl

To vex true hearts : yet was she
but a girl—

'Ah fool, and made myself a
Queen of farce !

When comes another such ? never,
I think,

Till the Sun drop dead from the
signs.'

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank
upon her hands,

And her great heart thro' all the
 faultful Past
 Went sorrowing in a pause I
 dared not break;
 Till notice of a change in the dark
 world
 Was lispt about the acacias, and
 a bird,
 That early woke to feed her little
 ones,
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for
 light:
 She moved, and at her feet the
 volume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,'
 I said, 'nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and
 barbarous laws;
 These were the rough ways of the
 world till now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper,
 me, that know
 The woman's cause is man's:
 they rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike,
 bond or free:
 For she that out of Lethe scales
 with man
 The shining steps of Nature,
 shares with man
 His nights, his days, moves with
 him to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in
 her hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured,
 miserable,
 How shall men grow? but work
 no more alone!
 Our place is much: as far as in us
 lies
 We two will serve them both in
 aiding her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but
 drag her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon
 out of all
 Within her—let her make herself
 her own
 To give or keep, to live and learn
 and be
 All that not harms distinctive
 womanhood.

For woman is not undevelop't
 man.
 But diverse: could we make her
 as the man,
 Sweet Love were slain: his dearest
 bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in
 difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must
 they grow;
 The man be more of woman,
 she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral
 height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that
 throw the world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in
 childward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger
 mind;
 Till at the last she set herself to
 man,
 Like perfect music unto noble
 words;
 And so these twain, upon the
 skirts of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all
 their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the
 To-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing
 each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other ev'n as those
 who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden
 back to men:
 Then reign the world's great
 bridals, chaste and calm:
 Then springs the crowning race of
 humankind.
 May these things be!'

Sighing she spoke 'I fear
 They will not.'

 'Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud
 watchward rest
 Of equal; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage
 lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal: each
 fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought
 in thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will,
 they grow,
 The single pure and perfect
 animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with
 one full stroke,
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke : 'A
 dream
 That once was mine ! what woman
 taught you this ?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier
 than I know,
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings
 of the world,
 I loved the woman : he, that doth
 not, lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet
 self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse
 than death,
 Or keeps his wing'd affections
 clipt with crime :
 Yet was there one thro' whom I
 loved her, one
 Not learned, save in gracious
 household ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender
 wants,
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
 In Angel instincts, breathing
 Paradise,
 Interpreter between the Gods and
 men,
 Who look'd all native to her place,
 and yet
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon
 a sphere
 Too gross to tread, and all male
 minds perforce
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as
 they moved,
 And girdled her with music.
 Happy he
 With such a mother ! faith in
 womankind
 Beats with his blood, and trust
 in all things high
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he
 trip and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with
 clay.'

'But I,'
 Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all
 unlike—
 It seems you love to cheat your-
 self with words :
 This mother is your model. I
 have heard
 Of your strange doubts : they
 well might be : I seem
 A mockery to my own self. Never,
 Prince ;
 You cannot love me.'
 'Nay but thee' I said
 'From yearlong poring on thy
 pictured eyes,
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee
 seen, and saw
 Thee woman thro' the crust of
 iron moods
 That mask'd thee from men's
 reverence up, and forced
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy
 boyhood : now,
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed,
 thro' thee,
 Indeed I love : the new day comes,
 the light
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou
 for faults
 Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my
 doubts are dead,
 My haunting sense of hollow
 shows : the change,
 This truthful change in thee has
 kill'd it. Dear,
 Look up, and let thy nature strike
 on mine,
 Like yonder morning on the blind
 half-world ;
 Approach and fear not ; breathe
 upon my brows ;
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past
 Melts mist-like into this bright
 hour, and this
 Is morn to more, and all the rich
 to-come
 Reels, as the golden Autumn
 woodland reels
 Athwart the smoke of burning
 weeds. Forgive me,
 I waste my heart in signs : let be.
 My bride,
 My wife, my life. O we will walk
 this world,

Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
 And so thro' those dark gates
 across the wild
 That no man knows. Indeed I
 love thee: come,
 Yield thyself up: my hopes and
 thine are one:
 Accomplish thou my manhood
 and thyself;
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and
 trust to me.'

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give
 you all
 The random scheme as wildly as
 it rose:
 The words are mostly mine; for
 when we ceased
 There came a minute's pause, and
 Walter said,
 'I wish she had not yielded!'
 then to me,
 'What, if you drest it up poeti-
 cally!'
 So pray'd the men, the women:
 I gave assent:
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd
 scheme of seven
 Together in one sheaf? What
 style could suit?
 The men required that I should
 give throughout
 The sort of mock-heroic gigant-
 esque,
 With which we banter'd little
 Lilia first:
 The women—and perhaps they
 felt their power,
 For something in the ballads
 which they sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they
 sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with
 burlesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a
 solemn close—
 They hated banter, wish'd for
 something real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—
 why
 Not make her true-heroic—true-
 sublime?

Or all, they said, as earnest as the
 close?
 Which yet with such a framework
 scarce could be.
 Then rose a little feud betwixt
 the two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the
 realists:
 And I, betwixt them both, to
 please them both,
 And yet to give the story as it
 rose,
 I moved as in a strange diag-
 onal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself
 nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she
 took no part
 In our dispute: the sequel of the
 tale
 Had touch'd her; and she sat, she
 pluck'd the grass,
 She flung it from her, thinking:
 last, she fixt
 A showery glance upon her aunt,
 and said,
 'You—tell us what we are' who
 might have told,
 For she was cramm'd with theories
 out of books,
 But that there rose a shout: the
 gates were closed
 At sunset, and the crowd were
 swarming now,
 To take their leave, about the
 garden rails.

So I and some went out to
 these: we climb'd
 The slope to Vivian-place, and
 turning saw
 The happy valleys, half in light,
 and half
 Far-shadowing from the west,
 a land of peace;
 Grey halls alone among their
 massive groves;
 Trim hamlets; here and there a
 rustic tower
 Half-lost in belts of hop and
 breadths of wheat;
 The shimmering glimpses of a
 stream; the seas;

A red sail, or a white; and far
beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the
skirts of France.

'Look there, a garden!' said
my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son,
'and there!
God bless the narrow sea which
keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole
within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the
ruled—

Some sense of duty, something
of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws our-
selves have made,
Some patient force to change them
when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against
the crowd—

But yonder, whiff! there comes a
sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose
his head,

The king is scared, the soldier will
not fight,

The little boys begin to shoot and
stab,

A kingdom topples over with a
shriek

Like an old woman, and down
rolls the world

In mock heroics stranger than our
own;

Revolts, republics, revolutions,
most

No graver than a schoolboys'
barring out;

Too comic for the solemn things
they are,

Too solemn for the comic touches
in them,

Like our wild Princess with as wise
a dream

As some of theirs—God bless the
narrow seas!

I wish they were a whole Atlantic
broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'our-
selves are full

Of social wrong; and maybe
wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the
truth:

For me, the genial day, the happy
crowd,

The sport half-science, fill me with
a faith.

This fine old world of ours is but
a child

Yet in the go-cart. Patience!
Give it time

To learn its limbs: there is a hand
that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the
garden rails,

And there we saw Sir Walter
where he stood,

Before a tower of crimson holly-
oaks,

Among six boys, head under head,
and look'd

No little lily-handed Baronet
he,

A great broad-shoulder'd genial
Englishman,

A lord of fat prize-oxen and of
sheep,

A raiser of huge melons and of
pine,

A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on
grain,

A quarter-sessions chairman, abler
none;

Fair-hair'd and redder than a
windy morn;

Now shaking hands with him, now
him, of those

That stood the nearest—now
address'd to speech—

Who spoke few words and pithy,
such as closed

Welcome, farewell, and welcome
for the year

To follow: a shout rose again,
and made

The long line of the approaching
rookery swerve

From the elms, and shook the
branches of the deer

From slope to slope thro' distant
ferns, and rang

Beyond the bourn of sunset; O,
a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that
hails
Premier or king! Why should not
these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen
times a year
To let the people breathe? So
thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they
stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey,
and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness
charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless
reverie,

Perchance upon the future man:
the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd,
and owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the
night,
That range above the region of the
wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight
broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the
worlds,
Beyond all thought into the
Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of
Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home
well-pleased we went.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal
Love,
Whom we, that have not seen
thy face,
By faith, and faith alone,
embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade;
Thou madest Life in man and
brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo,
thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast
made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the
dust:
Thou madest man, he knows
not why;
He thinks he was not made to
die;
And thou hast made him: thou
art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood,
thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not
how;
Our wills are ours, to make them
thine.

Our little systems have their
day;
They have their day and cease
to be:
They are but broken lights of
thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than
they.

We have but faith: we cannot
know;
For knowledge is of things we
see;
And yet we trust it comes from
thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in us
dwell;
That mind and soul, according
well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and
slight;
We mock thee when we do not
fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy
light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since
I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so
fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I

I HELD it truth, with him who
sings
To one clear harp in divers
tones,
That men may rise on stepping-
stones
Of their dead selves to higher
things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to
catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven
gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with
loss,
To dance with death, to beat the
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should
scorn
The long result of love, and
boast,
'Behold the man that loved
and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old Yew, which graspest at the
stones
That name the under-lying
dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless
head,
Thy roofs are wrapt about the
bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the
flock ;
And in the dusk of thee, the
clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns
avail
To touch thy thousand years of
gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardi-
hood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of
Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip ?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly
run ;
A web is wov'n across the sky ;
From out waste places comes a
cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun :

'And all the phantom, Nature,
stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural
good ;
Or crush her, like a vice of
blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away ;
My will is bondsman to the dark ;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from
thy desire,
Who scarcely dardest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low ?'

Something it is which thou hast
lost,
Some pleasure from thine early
years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling
tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble
cross
All night below the darken'd
eyes ;
With morning wakes the will,
and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel ;
For words, like Nature, half
reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap
 me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the
 cold;
 But that large grief which these
 enfold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'Other friends
 remain,'
 That 'Loss is common to the
 race'—
 And common is the common-
 place,
 And vacant chaff well meant for
 grain.

That loss is common would not
 make
 My own less bitter, rather more :
 Too common! Never morning
 wore
 To evening, but some heart did
 break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant
 son;
 A shot ere half thy draught be
 done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from
 thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor,—while thy head is
 bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-
 shroud
 Drops in his vast and wandering
 grave.

Ye know no more than I who
 wrought
 At that last hour to please him
 well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something
 thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here
 to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek unconscious
 dove,
 That sittest ranging golden
 hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy
 love!

For now her father's chimney
 glows
 In expectation of a guest;
 And thinking 'this will please
 him best,'
 She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
 And with the thought her colour
 burns;
 And, having left the glass, she
 turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the
 curse
 Had fallen, and her future Lord
 Was drown'd in passing thro'
 the ford,
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of
 good?
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more
 I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street,
 Doors, where my heart was used
 to beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no
 more—
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
 And like a guilty thing I creep
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
 The noise of life begins again,
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling
 rain
 On the bald street breaks the
 blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
 To look on her that loves him
 well,
 Who 'lights and rings the
 gateway bell,
 And learns her gone and far from
 home;

He saddens, all the magic light
 Dies off at once from bower and
 hall,
 And all the place is dark, and
 all
 The chambers emptied of de-
 light:

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to
 meet,
 The field, the chamber and the
 street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering
 there
 In those deserted walks, may
 find
 A flower beat with rain and
 wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with
 care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with
 thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not
 yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd
 eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may
 bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian
 shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved
 remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft
 him o'er.

So draw him home to those that
 mourn
 In vain; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and
 lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy
 urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
 bright
 As our pure love, thro' early
 light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around,
 above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before
 the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps
 now,
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the
 night;
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his
 wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign
 lands;
 And letters unto trembling
 hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd
 life.

So bring him: we have idle
dreams:

This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies: O to
us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the
rains,

Or where the kneeling hamlet
drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring
wells

Should gulf him fathom-deep
in brine;

And hands so often clasp'd in
mine,

Should toss with tangle and with
shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the
ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high
wold,

And on these dews that drench
the furze,

And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and
gold:

Calm and still light on yon great
plain

That sweeps with all its autumn
bowers,

And crowded farms and lessen-
ing towers,

To mingle with the bounding
main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide
air,

These leaves that redden to the
fall;

And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway them-
selves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble
breast

Which heaves but with the
heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of
woe,

Some dolorous message knit
below

The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,

A weight of nerves without a
mind,

And leave the cliffs, and haste
away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern
skies,

And see the sails at distance
rise,

And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my
friend?

Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air:

'Is this the end? Is this the
end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back

return
To where the body sits, and

learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he
sees

A late-lost form that sleep
reveals,

And moves his doubtful arms,
and feels

Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart
 reposed;
 And, where warm hands have
 prest and closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my
 choice,
 An awful thought, a life re-
 moved,
 The human-hearted man I
 loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many
 years,
 I do not suffer in a dream;
 For now so strange do these
 things seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their
 tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
 And glance about the approach-
 ing sails,
 As tho' they brought but
 merchants' bales,
 And not the burthen that they
 bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
 That thou hadst touch'd the
 land to-day,
 And I went down unto the quay,
 And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with
 woe,
 Should see thy passengers in
 rank
 Come stepping lightly down the
 plank,
 And beckoning unto those they
 know;

And if along with these should
 come
 The man I held as half-divine;
 Should strike a sudden hand in
 mine,
 And ask a thousand things of
 home:

And I should tell him all my
 pain,
 And how my life had droop'd
 of late,
 And he should sorrow o'er my
 state
 And marvel what possess'd my
 brain;

And I perceived no touch of
 change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the
 same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping
 day:
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the
 skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters
 curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and
 tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the
 world:

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain
 and stir

That makes the barren branches
 loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in
 woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder
 cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a labouring
 breast,
 And topples round the dreary
 west,
 A looming bastion fringed with
 fire.

xvi

What words are these have fall'n
from me ?

Can calm despair and wild
unrest

Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or
storm ;

But knows no more of transient
form

In her deep self, than some dead
lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a
heaven ?

Or has the shock, so harshly
given,
Confused me like the unhappy
bark

That strikes by night a craggy
shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she
sink ?

And stunn'd me from my power
to think
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan ?

xvii

Thou comest, much wept for :
such a breeze

Compell'd thy canvas, and my
prayer

Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding
sky,

Week after week : the days go
by :

Come quick, thou bringest all I
love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st
roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee
home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred
bark ;

And balmy drops in summer
dark

Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by
thee ;

The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

xviii

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may
stand

Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be
made

The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear
the head

That sleeps or wears the mask of
sleep,

And come, whatever loves to
weep,

And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips
impart

The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with
pain,

And slowly forms the firmer
mind,

Treasuring the look it cannot
find,

The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
 The darken'd heart that beat
 no more;
 They laid him by the pleasant
 shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling
 Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved
 along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of
 all,
 When fill'd with tears that
 cannot fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender
 vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fulness from the
 mind:
 'It will be hard,' they say, 'to
 find
 Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win;
 But there are other griefs
 within,
 And tears that at their fountain
 freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit,
 Cold in that atmosphere of
 Death,
 And scarce endure to draw the
 breath,
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
 So much the vital spirits sink
 To see the vacant chair, and
 think,
 'How good! how kind! and he
 is gone.'

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me
 wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to
 blow.

The traveller hears me now and
 then,
 And sometimes harshly will he
 speak;
 'This fellow would make weak-
 ness weak,
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to con-
 stancy.'

A third is wroth, 'Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the
 people throng
 The chairs and thrones of civil
 power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
 When Science reaches forth her
 arms
 To feel from world to world,
 and charms
 Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
 Ye never knew the sacred dust:
 I do but sing because I must,
 And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
 For now her little ones have
 ranged;
 And one is sad; her note is
 changed,
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased
us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose
and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow
to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the
way,
And, crown'd with all the
season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to
May :

But where the path we walk'd
began
To slant the fifth autumnal
slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of
man ;

Who broke our fair companion-
ship,
And spread his mantle dark and
cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the
fold,

And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not
see

Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in
the waste

The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow
shut,

Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to
foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the
creeds,

I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I
came,

Or on to where the pathway leads :

And crying, How changed from
where it ran

Thro' lands where not a leaf
was dumb ;

But all the lavish hills would
hum

The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to
each,

And Fancy light from Fancy
caught,

And Thought leapt out to wed
with Thought

Ere Thought could wed itself with
Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good
And all was good that Time
could bring,

And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the
blood ;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket
rang

To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight

As pure and perfect as I say ?

The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of
night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Para-
dise

It never look'd to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom
so great ?

The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief ?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far ;

And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved
therein ?

XXV

I know that this was Life,—the
track
Whereon with equal feet we
fared;
And then, as now, the day pre-
pared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would
cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker
Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power
to see

Within the green the moulder'd
tree,

And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no
more

And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the
morn

Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the
keys,

To shroud me from my proper
scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer
woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of
crime,
To whom a conscience never
wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as
blest,
The heart that never plighted
troth
But stagnates in the weeds of
sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and
lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of
Christ:

The moon is hid; the night is
still;

The Christmas bells from hill to
hill

Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets
round,

From far and near, on mead and
moor,

Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the
sound:

Each voice four changes on the
wind,

That now dilate, and now de-
crease,

Peace and goodwill, goodwill
and peace,

Peace and goodwill, to all man-
kind.

This year I slept and woke with
pain.

I almost wish'd no more to
wake,

And that my hold on life would
break

Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a
 boy;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd
 with joy,
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to
 grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-
 eve;

Which brings no more a welcome
 guest
 To enrich the threshold of the
 night
 With shower'd largess of delight,
 In dance and song and game and
 jest?

Yet go, and while the holly
 boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal
 font,
 Make one wreath more for Use
 and Wont,
 That guard the portals of the
 house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
 Grey nurses, loving nothing
 new;
 Why should they miss their
 yearly due
 Before their time? They too will
 die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we
 weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the
 earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
 We gambol'd, making vain
 pretence
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the
 beech:
 We heard them sweep the winter
 land;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, tho' every eye was
 dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet:
 'They rest,' we said, 'their
 sleep is sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: 'They do
 not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they
 change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the
 same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day
 from night:
 O Father, touch the east, and
 light
 The light that shone when Hope
 was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-
 cave,
 And home to Mary's house
 return'd,
 Was this demanded—if he
 yearn'd
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those
 four days?'
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling what it is to die
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours
met,
The streets were fill'd with
joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
He told it not ; or something
seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent
prayer,
Nor other thought her mind
admits
But, he was dead, and there he
sits,
And he that brought him back is
there.

Then one deep love doth super-
sede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's
face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious
fears,
Borne down by gladness so
complete,
She bows, she bathes the
Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with
tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are
faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love
endure ;
What souls possess themselves
so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a
purer air,
Whose faith has centre every-
where,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she
prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy
views ;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint
confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as
thine,
Her hands are quicker unto
good :
Oh, sacred be the flesh and
blood
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason
ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of
sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me
this,
That life shall live for ever-
more,
Else earth is darkness at the
core,
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of
flame,
Fantastic beauty ; such as
lurks
In some wild Poet, when he
works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such
as I ?
'Twere hardly worth my while
to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to
peace,
Like birds the charming serpent
draws,
To drop head-foremost in the
jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could
trust
Should murmur from the narrow
house,
'The cheeks drop in; the body
bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in
dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I
strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive: '
But I should turn mine ears and
hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift
or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and
sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a
sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful
shore
Will change my sweetness more
and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die,'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were
seen
At first as Death, Love had not
been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and
crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the
woods.

XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly
join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the
name
Of Him that made them current
coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal
powers,
Where truth in closest words
shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and
wrought
With human hands the creed of
creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic
thought;

Which he may read that binds the
sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the
grave,
And those wild eyes that watch
the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd
brow:
'Thou pratest here where thou
art least;
This faith has many a purer
priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper
sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her
cheek:
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthy Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching
heart,
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth
reveal'd;
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance
dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing to
thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed
away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-
flower!

When crown'd with blessing she
doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that
come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's
face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the
bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have
told,
And bring her babe, and make
her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her
most
Shall count new things as dear as
old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me
low;
My paths are in the fields I
know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XL

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to
higher;
As mounts the heavenward
altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something
strange,
And I have lost the links that
bound
Thy changes; here upon the
ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could
be—
That I could wing my will with
might
To leap the grades of life and
light,
And flash at once, my friend, to
thee:

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in
death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs be-
neath,
The howlings from forgotten
fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the
moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes
me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,
Tho' following with an upward
mind
The wonders that have come to
thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLI

I vex my heart with fancies dim :
He still outstript me in the race ;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd
with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To ripen growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows
not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and
knows ?

XLII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slum-
ber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and
whole
As when he loved me here in
Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIII

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and
more ;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and
tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding
sense
Gives out at times (he knows
not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean
springs)
May some dim touch of earthly
things
Surprise thee ranging with thy
peers.

If such a dreamy touch should
fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the
doubt ;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLIV

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is
prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I :'
But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of 'I,' and
'me,'
And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may
begin,
As thro' the frame that binds
him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and
breath,
Which else were fruitless of
their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and
flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing
hour,
Lest life should fail in looking
back.

So be it: there no shade can
last
In that deep dawn behind the
tomb,
But clear from marge to marge
shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;
A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
The fruitful hours of still in-
crease;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest
field.

O Love, thy province were not
large,
A bounded field, nor stretching
far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star
A rosy warmth from marge to
marge.

XLVI

That each, who seems a separate
whole,
Should move his rounds, and
fusing all
The skirts of self again, should
fall

Remerging in the general Soul,
Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all be-
side;
And I shall know him when we
meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the
mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at
least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and
say,
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in
light.'

XLVII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here
proposed,
Then these were such as men
might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods
remit,
What slender shade of doubt
may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with
words,
But better serves a wholesome
law,
And holds it sin and shame to
draw
The deepest measure from the
chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song
that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim
away.

XLVIII

From art, from nature, from the
schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd
lance
That breaks about the dappled
pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall
lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy
wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall
breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming - wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

XLIX

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
 And tingle, and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
 And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day.

L

Do we indeed desire the dead
 Should still be near us at our side?
 Is there no baseness we would hide?
 No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
 I had such reverence for his blame,
 See with clear eye some hidden shame
 And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
 There must be wisdom with great Death.
 The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
 With larger other eyes than ours,
 To make allowance for us all.

LI

I cannot love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved;
 My words are only words, and moved
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
 The Spirit of true love replied;
 'Thou canst not move me from thy side,
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears?
 What record? not the sinless years
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
 Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
 When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

LII

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish
 noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and
 green :

And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been
 sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had
 grown
 The grain by which a man may
 live ?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of
 youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a
 truth
 To those that eddy round and
 round ?

Hold thou the good : define it
 well :
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark,
 and be
 Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIII

Oh yet we trust that somehow
 good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of
 will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of
 blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless
 feet ;
 That not one life shall be
 destroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile
 complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in
 vain ;
 That not a moth with vain
 desire
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
 I can but trust that good shall
 fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to
 spring.

So runs my dream : but what am
 I ?
 An infant crying in the night :
 An infant crying for the light :
 And with no language but a cry.

LIV

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the
 grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul ?
 Are God and Nature then at
 strife,
 That Nature lends such evil
 dreams ?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of
 cares
 Upon the great world's altar-
 stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to
 God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
 grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and
 call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

LV

'So careful of the type ?' but no.
 From scarped cliff and quarried
 stone
 She cries 'A thousand types are
 gone :
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me :
 I bring to life, I bring to death :
 The spirit does but mean the
 breath :
 I know no more.' And he, shall
 he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd
 so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his
 eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry
 skies,

Who built him fanes of fruitless
 prayer,

Who trusted God was love in-
 deed

And love Creation's final law—
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and
 claw

With ravine, shriek'd against his
 creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless
 ills,

Who battled for the True, the
 Just,

Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a
 dream,

A discord. Dragons of the
 prime,

That tare each other in their
 slime,

Were mellow music match'd with
 him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
 O for thy voice to soothe and
 bless !

What hope of answer, or re-
 dress ?

Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVI

Peace; come away: the song of woe
 Is after all an earthly song :
 Peace; come away: we do him
 wrong
 To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are
 pale;
 But half my life I leave behind :
 Methinks my friend is richly
 shrined;
 But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to
 toll

The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
 Eternal greetings to the dead;
 And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
 'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

LVII

In those sad words I took farewell:
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
 As drop by drop the water falls
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell:

And, falling, idly broke the peace
 Of hearts that beat from day to
 day,

Half-conscious of their dying
 clay,

And those cold crypts where they
 shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Where-
 fore grieve

Thy brethren with a fruitless
 tear ?

Abide a little longer here,
 And thou shalt take a nobler
 leave.'

LVIII

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
 No casual mistress, but a wife,
 My bosom-friend and half of life;
 As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put thy harsher moods
 aside,

If thou wilt have me wise and
 good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to
play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art
mine,
With so much hope for years to
come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee,
some
Could hardly tell what name were
thine.

LIX

He past; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him
yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart
is set
On one whose rank exceeds her
own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her
lot,
Half jealous of she knows not
what,
And envying all that meet him
there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household
ways,
In that dark house where she was
born.

The foolish neighbours come and
go,
And tease her till the day draws
by:
At night she weeps, 'How vain
am I!
How should he love a thing so
low?'

LX

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change
replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and
slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold
and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must
I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful
shore,
Where thy first form was made
a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love,
nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee
more.

LXI

Tho' if an eye that's downward
cast
Could make thee somewhat
blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once
declined,
When he was little more than
boy,
On some unworthy heart with
joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the
while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound
has part,
Can hang no weight upon my
heart

In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than
these,
As thou, perchance, art more
than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at
ease.

So may'st thou watch me where I
 weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit
 round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIII

Dost thou look back on what hath
 been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate be-
 gan
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious
 bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy
 chance,
 And breasts the blows of cir-
 cumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit
 known
 And lives to clutch the golden
 keys,
 To mould a mighty state's
 decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the
 throne;

And moving up from high to
 higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning
 slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive
 dream,
 When all his active powers are
 still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal
 springs
 He play'd at counsellors and
 kings,
 With one that was his earliest
 mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native
 lea
 And reaps the labour of his
 hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands;
 'Does my old friend remember
 me?'

LXIV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou
 wilt;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost
 With 'Love's too precious to be
 lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases
 wrought
 There flutters up a happy
 thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of
 friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXV

You thought my heart too far
 diseased;
 You wonder when my fancies
 play
 To find me gay among the gay,
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was
 crost,
 Which makes a desert in the
 mind,
 Has made me kindly with my
 kind,
 And like to him whose sight is
 lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the
 land,
 Whose jest among his friends is
 free,
 Who takes the children on his
 knee,
 And winds their curls about his
 hand:

He plays with threads, he beats
his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the
sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVI

When on my bed the moonlight
falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
From off my bed the moonlight
dies ;
And closing eaves of wearied
eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a
ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVII

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother,
times my breath ;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother,
knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh
with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Réveillé to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know
not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the
doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth ;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee

LXVIII

I dream'd there would be Spring
no more,
That Nature's ancient power
was lost :
The streets were black with
smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny
boughs :
I took the thorns to bind my
brows,
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with
scorns
From youth and babe and
hoary hairs :
They call'd me in the public
squares
The fool that wears a crown of
thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd
me child :
I found an angel of the night ;
The voice was low, the look was
bright ;
He look'd upon my crown and
smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into
leaf :
The voice was not the voice of
grief,
The words were hard to under-
stand.

LXIX

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to
paint
The face I know ; the hues are
faint
And mix with hollow masks of
night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled
shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of
thought;

And crowds that stream from
yawning doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces
drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half
alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless
shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it
still.

LXX

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and
trance
And madness, thou hast forged
at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the
soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly
strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense
of wrong
That so my pleasure may be
whole;

While now we talk as once we
talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of
change,
The days that grow to some-
thing strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain
ridge,
The cataract flashing from the
bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXI

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of
night,
With blasts that blow the poplar
white,
And lash with storm the streaming
pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living
bloom,
And blurr'd the splendour of the
sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make
the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a wind-
less flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering
play'd
A chequer-work of beam and
shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hide-
ous crime,
When the dark hand struck
down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but
thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd
brows
Thro' clouds that drench the
morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf
afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring
sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous
day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless
gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the
ground.

LXXII

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,
 How know I what had need of
 thee,
 For thou wert strong as thou wert
 true ?

The fame is quench'd that I fore-
 saw,

The head hath miss'd an earthly
 wreath :

I curse not nature, no, nor death
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man
 trod

Is dim, or will be dim, with
 weeds :

What fame is left for human
 deeds

In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly, while the soul
 exults,

And self-infolds the large results
 Of force that would have forged a
 name.

LXXIII

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and
 more,

A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out—to someone of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and
 know

Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has
 made

His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXIV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
 In verse that brings myself
 relief,

And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that
 sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou
 wert ?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long
 And round thee with the breeze
 of song
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath
 the sun,

The world which credits what is
 done

Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy
 fame ;

But somewhere, out of human
 view,

Whate'er thy hands are set to do
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXV

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of
 space

Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten
 thro'

The secular abyss to come,
 And lo, thy deepest lays are
 dumb

Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last,
 Thine own shall wither in the
 vast,

Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their
 branchy bowers

With fifty Mays, thy songs are
 vain ;

And what are they when these
 remain

The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVI

What hope is here for modern
rhyme

To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives,
that lie

Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain

May bind a book, may line a box
May serve to curl a maiden's
locks;

Or when a thousand moons shall
wane

A man upon a stall may find,

And, passing, turn the page that
tells

A grief, then changed to some-
thing else,

Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd
ways

Shall ring with music all the
same;

To breathe my loss is more than
fame,

To utter love more sweet than
praise.

LXXVII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth;

The silent snow possess'd the
earth,

And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with
frost,

No wing of wind the region
swept,

But over all things brooding
slept

The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,

Again our ancient games had
place,

The mimic picture's breathing
grace,

And dance and song and hoodman-
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane;
O grief, can grief be changed to
less?

O last regret, regret can die!

No—mixt with all this mystic
frame,

Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXVIII

'More than my brothers are to
me'—

Let this not vex thee, noble
heart!

I know thee of what force thou
art

To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,

As moulded like in nature's
mint;

And hill and wood and field did
print

The same sweet forms in either
mind.

For us the same cold streamlet
curl'd

Thro' all his eddying coves; the
same

All winds that roam the twilight
came

In whispers of the beauteous
world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd
vows,

One lesson from one book we
learn'd,

Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet
turn'd

To black and brown on kindred
brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was

poor,
And he supplied my want the

more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXIX

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his
side,
And dropt the dust on tearless
eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had
wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and
man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he
speaks;
He bears the burthen of the
weeks,
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe
and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort
me.

LXXX

Could I have said while he was
here,
'My love shall now no further
range;
There cannot come a mellow
change,
For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer
store:
What end is here to my com-
plaint?
This haunting whisper makes
me faint,
'More years had made me love
thee more.'

But Death returns an answer
sweet:
'My sudden frost was sudden
gain,
And gave all ripeness to the
grain,
It might have drawn from after-
heat.'

LXXXI

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form
and face;
No lower life that earth's
embrace
May breed with him, can fright
my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit
walks;
And these are but the shatter'd
stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human
worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my
heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long;
Thou doest expectant nature
wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded
noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper
place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove
spire,
The little speedwell's darling
blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with
song.

LXXXIII

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine
 below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the
 glow
 To which thy crescent would have
 grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with
 good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp
 and kiss,

On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly
 mine;

For now the day was drawing on
 When thou should'st link thy
 life with one
 Of mine own house, and boys of
 thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange
 flower,
 Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call
 them mine.

I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour
 fills

The lips of men with honest
 praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous
 hours

Conduct by paths of growing
 powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly
 wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of
 thought,
 Thy spirit should fail from off the
 globe;

What time mine own might also
 flee,
 As link'd with thine in love and
 fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous
 strait
 To the other shore, involved in
 thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land
 Would reach us out the shining
 hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I
 leant?

Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
 wake
 The old bitterness again, and
 break
 The low beginnings of content.

LXXXIV

This truth came borne with bier
 and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and
 lost,
 Than never to have loved at
 all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common
 grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things
 above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sus-
 tain'd;
 And whether love for him have
 drain'd
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as
 draws
 A faithful answer from the
 breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half
 exprest,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message
 falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he
 slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal
 state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome
 there;

And led him thro' the blissful
 climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain
 fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of
 flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were
 dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were
 little worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me
 breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion
 warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human
 hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might
 express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not
 swerved
 To works of weakness, but I
 find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength re-
 served.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual
 strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my
 life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I
 met;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us
 men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd
 Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears:
 The all-assuming months and
 years
 Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming
 floods,
 And Spring that swells the nar-
 row brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of
 rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and
 wave
 Recalls, in change of light or
 gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to
 speak :
 'Arise, and get thee forth and
 seek
 A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
 But in dear words of human
 speech
 We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
 The starry clearness of the free ?
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for
 me
 Some painless sympathy with
 pain ?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;
 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
 Or so methinks the dead would
 say;
 Or so shall grief with symbols
 play,
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
 That these things pass, and I
 shall prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with
 love,
 I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
 The promise of the golden hours?
 First love, first friendship, equal
 powers,
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place,
 That yet remembers his embrace
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not
 rest
 Quite in the love of what is
 gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with
 one
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is
 dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXV

Sweet after showers, ambrosial
 air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous
 gloom
 Of evening over brake and
 bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing
 bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd
 wood,
 And shadowing down the horned
 flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and
 sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy
 breath
 Throughout my frame, till
 Doubt and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming
 far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVI

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the
 gown;
 I roved at random thro' the
 town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college
 fanes
 The storm their high-built
 organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling,
 shake
 The prophets blazon'd on the
 panes;

And caught once more the distant
 shout,
 The measured pulse of racing
 oars

Among the willows; paced the
 shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same grey flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same;
 and last

Up that long walk of limes I
 past
 To see the rooms in which he
 dwelt.

Another name was on the door :
 I linger'd ; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands,
 and boys
 That crash'd the glass and beat
 the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a
 band
 Of youthful friends, on mind
 and art,
 And labour, and the changing
 mart,
 And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow
 fair,
 But send it slackly from the
 string ;
 And one would pierce an outer
 ring,
 And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A
 willing ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung
 to hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power
 and grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we
 saw
 The God within him light his face,
 And seem to lift the form, and
 glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
 And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid
 sweet,
 Rings Eden thro' the budded
 quicks,
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions
 meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes
 employ
 Thy spirits in the darkening
 leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of
 grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude
 woe—
 I cannot all command the
 strings ;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and
 go.

LXXXVIII

Witch-elms that counterchange
 the floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and
 bright ;
 And thou, with all thy breadth
 and height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down
 My Arthur found your shadows
 fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of
 town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
 He mixt in all our simple sports ;
 They pleased him, fresh from
 brawling courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and
 mark
 The landscape winking thro' the
 heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning
 dew,
 The gust that round the garden
 flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing
 pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were
 fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp
 and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods
 Beyond the bounding hill to
 stray,
 And break the livelong summer
 day
 With banquet in the distant
 woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme
 to theme,
 Discuss'd the books to love or
 hate,
 Or touch'd the changes of the
 state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For 'ground in yonder social
 mill
 We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and
 gloss
 The picturesque of man and
 man.'

We talk'd : the stream beneath
 us ran,
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in
 moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming
 wave ;
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle - deep in
 flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine
 veil
 The milk that bubbled in the
 pail,
 And buzzings of the honied hours.

LXXXIX

He tasted love with half his mind,
 Nor ever drank the inviolate
 spring
 Where nighest heaven, who first
 could fling
 This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying
 eyes
 Were closed with wail, resume
 their life,
 They would but find in child
 and wife
 An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm
 with wine,
 To pledge them with a kindly
 tear,
 To talk them o'er, to wish them
 here,
 To count their memories half
 divine ;

But if they came who past away,
 Behold their brides in other
 hands ;
 The hard heir strides about their
 lands,
 And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of
these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would
make
Confusion worse than death, and
shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to
me :
Whatever change the years have
wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for
thee.

XC

When rosy plumelets tuft the
larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted
thrush ;

Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I
know

Thy spirit in time among thy
peers ;

The hope of unaccomplish'd
years

Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
change

May breathe, with many roses
sweet,

Upon the thousand waves of
wheat,

That ripple round the lonely
grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,

Come, beauteous in thine after
form,

And like a finer light in light.

XCI

If any vision should reveal

Thy likeness, I might count it
vain

As but the canker of the brain ;

Yea, tho' it spake and made
appeal

To chances where our lots were
cast

Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a
wind

Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to
view

A fact within the coming year ;
And tho' the months, revolving
near,

Should prove the phantom-warn-
ing true,

They might not seem thy pro-
phesies,

But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events

As often rises ere they rise.

XCII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say

No spirit ever brake the band

That stays him from the native
land,

Where first he walk'd when claspt
in clay ?

No visual shade of some one
lost,

But he, the Spirit himself, may
come

Where all the nerve of sense is
numb ;

Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless
range

With gods in unconjectured
bliss,

O, from the distance of the
abyss

Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ;
hear

The wish too strong for words
to name ;

That in this blindness of the
frame

My Ghost may feel that thine is
near.

XCIII

How pure at heart and sound in
head,
With what divine affections
bold
Should be the man whose
thought would hold
An hour's communion with the
dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden
day,
Except, like them, thou too
canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the
breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal
waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCIV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er
the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering : not a cricket
chirr'd :
The brook alone far-off was
heard,
And on the board the fluttering
urn :

And bats went round in fragrant
skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy
shapes
That haunt the dusk, with
ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded
eyes :

While now we sang old songs that
peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and
the trees
Laid their dark arms about the
field.

But when those others, one by
one,
Withdrew themselves from me
and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
Of that glad year which once
had been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept
their green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and
strange
Was love's dumb cry defying
change
To test his worth ; and strangely
spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to
dwell
On doubts that drive the coward
back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to
track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by
line,
The dead man touch'd me from
the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
His living soul was flash'd on
mine,

And mine in his was wound, and
whirl'd
About empyreal heights of
thought,
And came on that which is, and
caught
The deep pulsations of the world.

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks
 of Chance—
 The blows of Death. At length
 my trance
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
 doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard
 to frame
 In matter-moulded forms of
 speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I
 became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where,
 couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and
 the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the
 field:

And suck'd from out the distant
 gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycam-
 ore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms,
 and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and
 flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn' and died
 away;
 And East and West, without a
 breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life
 and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCV

You say, but with no touch of
 scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
 blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies,
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question
 versed,
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at
 first
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in
 deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest
 doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the
 creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd
 strength,
 He would not make his judg-
 ment blind,
 He faced the spectres of the
 mind
 And laid them: thus he came at
 length

To find a stronger faith his own;
 And Power was with him in the
 night,
 Which makes the darkness and
 the light,
 And dwells not in the light
 alone,

But in the darkness and the
 cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of
 gold,
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVI

My love has talk'd with rocks and
 trees;
 He finds on misty mountain-
 ground
 His own vast shadow glory-
 crowned;
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
 I look'd on these and thought of
 thee
 In vastness and in mystery,
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye
 on eye,
 Their hearts of old have beat in
 tune,
 Their meetings made December
 June,
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
 The days she never can forget
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
 He loves her yet, she will not
 weep,
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and
 deep
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the
 mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
 He looks so cold : she thinks him
 kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
 A wither'd violet is her bliss :
 She knows not what his great-
 ness is ;
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows ;
 She knows but matters of the
 house,
 And he, he knows a thousand
 things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and
 wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful
 eyes,
 'I cannot understand : I love.'

XCVII

You leave us : you will see the
 Rhine,
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,
 When I was there with him ;
 and go
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest
 breath,
 That City. All her splendour
 seems
 No livelier than the wisp that
 gleams
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of
 me :

I have not seen, I will not see
 Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
 The birth, the bridal ; friend
 from friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend
 Above more graves, a thousand
 wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sad-
 ness flings

Her shadow on the blaze of
 kings :

And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and
 fro

The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more con-
 tent,

He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and
 loud

With sport and song, in booth and
 tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;
 And wheels the circled dance,
 and breaks

The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCVIII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the
 herds,
 Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling
red
On yon swoll'n brook that
bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the
past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged
eaves
A song that slights the coming
care,
And Autumn laying here and
there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy
breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the
poles,
To-day they count as kindred
souls;
They know me not, but mourn
with me.

XCIX

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not
breathe
Some gracious memory of my
friend;

No grey old grange, or lonely
fold,
Or low morass and whispering
reed,
Or simple stile from mead to
mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet
trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the
hill
And haunted by the wrangling
daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that
swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy
curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;
But each has pleased a kindred
eye
And each reflects a kindlier
day;
And, leaving these, to pass
away,
I think once more he seems to die.

C

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall
sway,
The tender blossom flutter
down,
Unloved, that beech will gather
brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining
fair,
Ray round with flames her disk
of seed,
And many a rose-carnation
feed
With summer spice the humming
air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down
the plain,
At noon or when the lesser
wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy
grove,
And flood the haunts of hern
and crake;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and
cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape
grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the labourer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the
 glades;
 And year by year our memory
 fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

CI

We leave the well-beloved place
 Where first we gazed upon the
 sky;
 The roofs, that heard our earliest
 cry,
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
 As down the garden-walks I
 move,
 Two spirits of a diverse love
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood
 sung
 Long since its matin song, and
 heard
 The low love-language of the bird
 In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
 Thy feet have stray'd in after
 hours
 With thy lost friend among the
 bowers,
 And this hath made them trebly
 dear.'

These two have striven half the
 day,
 And each prefers his separate
 claim,
 Poor rivals in a losing game,
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set
 To leave the pleasant fields and
 farms;
 They mix in one another's arms
 To one pure image of regret.

CII

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was
 bred,
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
 And maidens with me : distant
 hills
 From hidden summits fed with
 rills
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
 They sang of what is wise and
 good
 And graceful. In the centre
 stood
 A statue veil'd to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known
 to me,
 The shape of him I loved, and
 love
 For ever : then flew in a dove
 And brought a summons from the
 sea :

And when they learnt that I must
 go
 They wept and wail'd, but led
 the way
 To where a little shallop lay
 At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
 And shadowing bluff that made
 the banks,
 We glided winding under ranks
 Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,
 And roll'd the floods in grander
 space,
 The maidens gather'd strength
 and grace
 And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
 And watch'd them, wax'd in
 every limb ;
 I felt the thews of Anakim,
 The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of
 war,
 And one would chant the history
 Of that great race, which is
 to be,
 And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we
 saw
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on
 deck,
 But thrice as large as man he
 bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
 And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one
 mind
 Bewail'd their lot; I did them
 wrong :
 'We served thee here,' they said,
 'so long,
 And wilt thou leave us now
 behind ?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
 And go with us : ' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steer'd her toward a crimson
 cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIII

The time draws near the birth of
 Christ;
 The moon is hid, the night is
 still;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they
 sound,
 In lands where not a memory
 strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other
 days,
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CIV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand :
 We live within the stranger's
 land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-
 eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows :
 There in due time the woodbine
 blows,
 The violet comes, but we are
 gone.

No more shall wayward grief
 abuse
 The genial hour with mask and
 mime;
 For change of place, like growth
 of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows
 cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly
 proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the
 floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle
 warm;
 For who would keep an ancient
 form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no
 more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor
 feast;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
 blown;
 No dance, no motion, save
 alone
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the
 seed;
 Run out your measured arcs,
 and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CV

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild
sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty
light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him
die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the
snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the
true.

Ring out the grief that saps the
mind,
For those that here we see no
more;
Ring out the feud of rich and
poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party
strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of
life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the
sin,
The faithless coldness of the
times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and
blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and
right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of
gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of
old,
Ring in the thousand years of
peace.

Ring in the valiant man and
free,
The larger heart, the kindlier
hand;
Ring out the darkness of the
land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVI

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or
leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely
flies
The blast of North and East,
and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd
eaves.

And bristles all the brakes and
thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she
hangs
Above the wood which grides
and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But
fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the
glass;

Bring in great logs and let them
lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and
treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal
cheer,
With books and music, surely
we
Will drink to him, whate'er he
be,
And sing the songs he loved to
hear.

CVII

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
 And vacant yearning, tho' with
 might
 To scale the heaven's highest
 height,
 Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chant-
 ing hymns?
 And on the depths of death there
 swims
 The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies:
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us
 wise,
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CVIII

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
 From household fountains never
 dry;
 The critic clearness of an eye,
 That saw thro' all the Muses'
 walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
 To seize and throw the doubts
 of man;
 Impassion'd logic, which outran
 The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
 But touch'd with no ascetic
 gloom;
 And passion pure in snowy
 bloom
 Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
 Of freedom in her regal seat
 Of England; not the schoolboy
 heat,
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female
 grace
 In such a sort, the child would
 twine
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in
 thine,
 And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine
 eyes
 Have look'd on: if they look'd
 in vain,
 My shame is greater who re-
 main
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CIX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
 The men of rathe and riper years
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
 The proud was half disarm'd of
 pride,
 Nor cared the serpent at thy
 side
 To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou
 wert by,
 The flippant put himself to
 school
 And heard thee, and the brazen
 fool
 Was soften'd, and he knew not
 why;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
 And felt thy triumph was as
 mine;
 And loved them more, that they
 were thine,
 The graceful tact, the Christian
 art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the
 skill,
 But mine the love that will not
 tire,
 And, born of love, the vague
 desire
 That spurs an imitative will.

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, thro'
 all,
 To him who grasps a golden
 ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

CX

The churl in spirit, howe'er he
 veil
 His want in forms for fashion's
 sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories
 call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and
 join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an
 eye,
 Where God and Nature met in
 light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentle-
 man,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXI

High wisdom holds my wisdom
 less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate
 eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why
 I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel
 power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too
 much,
 In watching thee from hour to
 hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest
 made,
 And world - wide fluctuation
 sway'd
 In vassal tides that follow'd
 thought.

CXII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us
 wise ;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps
 with thee
 Which not alone had guided
 me,
 But served the seasons that may
 rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee
 keen
 In intellect, with force and
 skill
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
 I doubt not what thou wouldst
 have been :

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission
 sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather
 force,
 Becoming, when the time has
 birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come
 and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with
 cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

CXIII

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who
 shall rail
 Against her beauty ? May she
 mix
 With men and prosper ! Who
 shall fix
 Her pillars ? Let her work pre-
 vail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :
 She sets her forward counten-
 ance
 And leaps into the future chance
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and
 vain—
 She cannot fight the fear of
 death.
 What is she, cut from love and
 faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the
 brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her
 place ;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her
 mild
 If all be not in vain ; and
 guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by
 side
 With wisdom, like the younger
 child :

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the
 soul.
 O, friend, who camest to thy
 goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like
 thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and
 hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXIV

Now fades the last long streak of
 snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of
 quick
 About the flowering squares,
 and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and
 long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living
 blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and
 lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the
 vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or
 dives
 In yondergreening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change
 their sky
 To build and brood ; that live
 their lives

From land to land ; and in my
 breast
 Spring wakens too ; and my
 regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the
 rest.

CXV

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April
 wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives
 and takes
 The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten
 trust
 In that which made the world so
 fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone ;
 And that dear voice, I once have
 known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune
 dead ;
 Less yearning for the friendship
 fled,
 Than some strong bond which is
 to be.

CXVI

O days and hours, your work is
 this,
 To hold me from my proper
 place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
 And unto meeting when we meet
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that
 steals,
 And every kiss of toothed
 wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant labouring in his youth ;
 Nor dream of human love and
 truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the
 dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random
 forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic
 storms,
 Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from
 clime to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place.
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to
 more
 Or, crown'd with attributes of
 woe
 Like glories, move his course,
 and show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning
 fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing
 tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of
 doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual
 feast ;
 Move upward, working out the
 beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

CXVIII

Doors, where my heart was used
 to beat
 So quickly, not as one that
 weeps
 I come once more ; the city
 sleeps ;
 I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-
 withdrawn
 A light-blue lane of early
 dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are
 bland
 And bright the friendship of
 thine eye ;
 And in my thoughts with scarce
 a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine
 hand.

CXIX

I trust I have not wasted breath :
 I think we are not wholly
 brain,
 Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought
 with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :
 Let Science prove we are, and
 then
 What matters Science unto men
 At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who
 springs
 Hereafter, up from childhood
 shape
 His action like the greater ape,
 But I was born to other things.

CXX

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
 And ready, thou, to die with
 him,
 Thou watchest all things ever
 dim
 And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the
 wain,
 The boat is drawn upon the
 shore ;
 Thou listenest to the closing
 door,
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the
 night,
 By thee the world's great work
 is heard
 Beginning, and the wakeful
 bird ;
 Behind thee comes the greater
 light :

The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the
 brink ;
 Thou hear'st the village hammer
 clink,
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double
 name
 For what is one, the first, the
 last,
 Thou, like my present and my
 past,
 Thy place is changed ; thou art
 the same.

CXXI

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest,
 then,
 While I rose up against my
 doom,
 And yearn'd to burst the folded
 gloom,
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my
 soul,
 In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the
 grave
 Divide us not, be with me now
 And enter in at breast and
 brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
 I slip the thoughts of life and
 death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dew-drop paints a
 bow,
 The wizzard lightnings deeply
 glow,
 And every thought breaks out a
 rose.

CXXII

There rolls the deep where grew
 the tree.

O earth, what changes hast
 thou seen !

There where the long street
 roars, hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they
 flow
 From form to form, and nothing
 stands;
 They melt like mist, the solid
 lands,
 Like clouds they shape themselves
 and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold
 it true;
 For tho' my lips may breathe
 adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIII

That which we dare invoke to
 bless;
 Our dearest faith; our ghastliest
 doubt;
 He, They, One, All; within,
 without;
 The Power in darkness whom we
 guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
 Nor thro' the questions men
 may try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
 I heard a voice 'believe no
 more'
 And heard an eyer-breaking
 shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would
 melt
 The freezing reason's colder
 part,
 And like a man in wrath the
 heart
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have
 felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
 But that blind clamour made
 me wise;
 Then was I as a child that cries,
 But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man under-
 stands;
 And out of darkness came the
 hands
 That reach thro' nature, moulding
 men.

CXXIV

Whatever I have said or sung,
 Some bitter notes my harp
 would give,
 Yea, tho' there often seem'd to
 live
 A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her
 youth;
 She did but look through dim-
 mer eyes;
 Or Love but play'd with gracious
 lies,
 Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
 He breathed the spirit of the
 song;
 And if the words were sweet
 and strong
 He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
 To seek thee on the mystic
 deeps,
 And this electric force, that
 keeps
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXV

Love is and was my Lord and
 King
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers
 bring.

Love is and was my King and
 Lord,
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and
 sleep
 Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to
 place,
 And whispers to the worlds of
 space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVI

And all is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
 Well roars the storm to those
 that hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,
 Proclaiming social truth shall
 spread,
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice
 again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with
 dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags :
 They tremble, the sustaining
 crags ;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
 The fortress crashes from on
 high,
 The brute earth lightens to the
 sky,
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy
 star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVII

The love that rose on stronger
 wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with
 Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human
 things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward times shall yet bemade,
 And throned races may degrade ;
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
 Fear,
 If all your office had to do
 With old results that look like
 new ;
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless
 sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious
 lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and
 cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness pictur-
 esque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well
 descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil cöoperant to an end.

CXXVIII

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;
 O loved the most, when most I
 feel
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human,
 divine ;
 Sweet human hand and lips and
 eye ;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst
 not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and
 to be ;
 Loved deeper, darker under-
 stood ;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXIX

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
 I hear thee where the waters run ;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot
 guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and
 flower
 To feel thee some diffusive
 power,
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
 thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXX

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer
 shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make
 them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and
 trust,

With faith that comes of self-
 control,
 The truths that never can be
 proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage
 lay;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he
 loved
 A daughter of our house; nor
 proved
 Since that dark day a day like
 this;

Tho' I since then have number'd
 o'er
 Some thrice three years: they
 went and came,
 Remade the blood and changed
 the frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set,
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are
 flown,
 For I myself with these have
 grown
 To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I
 made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and
 shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere
 noon?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee; they meet
 thy look
 And brighten like the star that
 shook
 Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she
 grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power
 As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent; wearing all that
 weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my
knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's
arm,
That shielded all her life from
harm
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the
dead ;
Their pensive tablets round her
head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring
is on,
The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and
again
The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out
of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made ye
one.

Now sign your names, which shall
be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn ;
The names are sign'd, and over-
head

Begins the clash and clang that
tells
The joy to every wandering
breeze ;
The blind wall rocks, and on the
trees
The dead leaf trembles to the
bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry
face
Salutes them—maidens of the
place,
That pelt us in the porch with
flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I
gave.
They leave the porch, they pass
the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life
increased,
Who stay to share the morning
feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
My drooping memory will not
shun
The foaming grape of eastern
France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and
faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and
groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among
the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws
on,
And those white-favour'd horses
wait ;
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are
gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the
park,

Discussing how their courtship
grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what
he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought,
the wealth
Of words and wit, the double
health, [three,
The crowning cup, the three-times-

And last the dance;—till I retire :
 Dumb is that tower which spake
 so loud,
 And high in heaven the stream-
 ing cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder
 down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapour sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing
 rills,
 And catch at every mountain
 head,
 And o'er the friths that branch
 and spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal
 doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the
 wall ;
 And breaking let the splendour
 fall

To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean
 sounds,
 And, star and system rolling
 past,
 A soul shall draw from out the
 vast
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower
 phase,
 Result in man, be born and
 think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge ; under whose
 command
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in
 their hand
 Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved
 and did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but
 seed
 Of what in them is flower and
 fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me
 trod
 This planet, was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were
 ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in
 God,

That God, which ever lives and
 loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation
 moves.

IDYLLS OF THE KING

DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he
held them dear,
Perchance as finding there uncon-
sciously
Some image of himself—I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my own ideal
knight,
'Who revered his conscience as
his king;
Whose glory was, redressing
human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor
listen'd to it;
Who loved one only and who clave
to her—'
Her—over all whose realms to
their last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of
imminent war,
The shadow of His loss drew like
eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have
lost him: he is gone:
We know him now: all narrow
jealousies
Are silent; and we see him as he
moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accom-
plish'd, wise,
With what sublime repression of
himself,
And in what limits, and how
tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to
that;
Not making his high place the
lawless perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a van-
tage-ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this
tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a
blameless life,
Before a thousand peering little-
nesses,
In that fierce light which beats
upon a throne,

And blackens every blot: for
where is he,
Who dares foreshadow for an only
son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd,
than his?
Or how should England dreaming
of his sons
Hope more for these than some
inheritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as
thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings
to be,
Laborious for her people and her
poor—
Voice in the rich dawn of an
ampler day—
Far-sighted summoner of War and
Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
peace—
Sweet nature gilded by the gra-
cious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear
to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a
Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household
name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert
the Good.

Break not, O woman's heart,
but still endure;
Break not, for thou art Royal, but
endure,
Remembering all the beauty of
that star
Which shone so close beside Thee,
that ye made
One light together, but has past
and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'er-
shadow Thee,
The love of all Thy sons encompass
Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters
cherish Thee,

The love of all Thy people comfort
Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at his side
again !

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none
other child ;
And she was fairest of all flesh on
earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one de-
light.

For many a petty king ere
Arthur came
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging
war
Each upon other, wasted all the
land ;
And still from time to time the
heathen host
Swarm'd overseas, and harried
what was left.
And so there grew great tracts of
wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more
and more,
But man was less and less, till
Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought
and died,
And after him King Uther fought
and died,
But either fail'd to make the king-
dom one.
And after these King Arthur for a
space,
And thro' the puissance of his
Table Round,
Drew all their petty princedoms
under him,
Their king and head, and made a
realm, and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard
was waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many
a beast therein,
And none or few to scare or chase
the beast ;

So that wild dog, and wolf and
boar and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in
the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the
king.
And ever and anon the wolf would
steal
The children and devour, but now
and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent
her fierce teat
To human sucklings ; and the
children, housed
In her foul den, there at their
meat would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on
four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to
wolf-like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King
Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions
here again,
And Cæsar's eagle then his
brother king,
Rience, assail'd him : last a
heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and
earth with blood,
And on the spike that split the
mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him,
till, amazed,
He knew not whither he should
turn for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur
newly crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made
by those
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's
son'—the king
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and
help us thou !
For here between the man and
beast we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no
deed of arms,
But heard the call, and came ; and
Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch
him pass ;

But since he neither wore on helm
or shield
The golden symbol of his kingli-
hood,
But rode a simple knight among
his knights,
And many of these in richer arms
than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not,
if she saw,
One among many, tho' his face
was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as
he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his
life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on,
and pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. And
he drave
The heathen, and he slew the
beast, and fell'd
The forest, and let in the sun, and
made
Broad pathways for the hunter
and the knight;
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in
the hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of
his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for
most of these
Made head against him, crying,
'Who is he
That he should rule us? who hath
proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we
look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing,
limbs nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom
we knew.
This is the son of Gorlois, not the
king;
This is the son of Anton, not the
king.'

And Arthur, passing thence to
battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of
the life,

Desiring to be join'd with Guine-
vere;
And thinking as he rode, 'Her
father said
That there between the man and
beast they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land
of beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side
with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely
king,
Vext—O ye stars that shudder
over me,
O earth that soundest hollow under
me,
Vext with waste dreams? for
saving I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under
heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty
world,
And cannot will my will, nor
work my work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine
own realm
Victor and lord. But were I join'd
with her,
Then might we live together as
one life,
And reigning with one will in
everything
Have power on this dark land to
lighten it,
And power on this dead world to
make it live.'

And Arthur from the field of
battle sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King
Leodogran,
Saying, 'If I in ought have served
thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere
to wife.'
Whom when he heard, Leodo-
gran in heart
Debating—'How should I that
am a king,
However much he help me at my
need,
Give my one daughter saving to
a king,

And a king's son'—lifted his
voice, and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
whom
He trusted all things, and of him
required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou
aught of Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamber-
lain and said,
'Sir king, there be but two old
men that know:
And each as twice as old as I;
and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever
served
King Uther thro' his magic art;
and one
Is Merlin's master (so they call
him) Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the
scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that
Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down,
and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin
did
In one great annal-book, where
after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's
birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran
replied,
'O friend, had I been holpen half
as well
By this King Arthur as by thee
to-day,
Then beast and man had had their
share of me:
But summon here before us yet
once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before
him, the king said,
'I have seen the cuckoo chased by
lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase: but
wherefore now
Do these your lords stir up the
heat of war,

Some calling Arthur born of
Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye
yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King
Uther's son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias an-
swer'd, 'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his
knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crown-
ing, spake—
For bold in heart and act and
word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against
the king—

"Sir, there be many rumours
on this head:
For there be those who hate him
in their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his
ways are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him
less than man:
And there be those who deem him
more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven:
but my belief
In all this matter—so ye care to
learn—
Sir, for ye know that in King
Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he
that held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife,
Ygerne:
And daughters had she borne him,
—one whereof
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister
cleaved
To Arthur,—but a son she had
not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of
love:
But she, a stainless wife of Gorlois,
So loathed the bright dishonour
of his love,
That Gorlois and King Uther went
to war:

And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
 And there was none to call to but himself.
 So, compass'd by the power of the king,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness : afterward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
 After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.
 And that same night, the night of the new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vex'd his mother, all before his time
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come ; because the lords
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they known ; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the child,
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight
 And ancient friend of Uther ; and his wife

Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with her own ;
 And no man knew. And ever since the lords
 Have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,
 So that the realm has gone to wrack : but now,
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour had come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,
 Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir, your king,'
 A hundred voices cried, "Away with him !
 No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no king,
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his craft,
 And while the people clamour'd for a king,
 Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the king debated with himself
 If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his time,
 Or whether there were truth in anything
 Said by these three, there came to Cameliard,
 With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent ;
 Whom as he could, not as he would, the king
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas—
 Ye come from Arthur's court : think ye this king—

So few his knights, however brave
they be—
Hath body enow to beat his foe-
man down ?'

'O king,' she cried, 'and I will
tell thee : few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him ;
For I was near him when the
savage yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and
Arthur sat
Crown'd on the daïs, and his
warriors cried,
"Be thou the king, and we will
work thy will
Who love thee." Then the king in
low deep tones,
And simple words of great au-
thority,
Bound them by so strait vows to
his own self,
That when they rose, knighted
from kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a
ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as
one who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a
light.

'But when he spake and
cheer'd his Table Round
With large, divine, and comfort-
able words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I
beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their
Order flash
A momentary likeness of the
king :
And ere it left their faces, thro'
the cross
And those around it and the
Crucified,
Down from the casement over
Arthur, smote
Flame-colour, vert and azure, in
three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair
queens,
Who stood in silence near his
throne, the friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall,
with bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at
his need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin,
whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as
the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their
liege.

'And near him stood the Lady
of the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than
his own—
Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful.
She gave the king his huge cross-
hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen
out : a mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and
her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the min-
ster gloom ;
But there was heard among the
holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she
dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever
storms
May shake the world, and when
the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters
like our Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excali-
bur
Before him at his crowning borne,
the sword
That rose from out the bosom of
the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took
it—rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the
blade so bright
That men are blinded by it—on
one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all
this world,
"Take me," but turn the blade and
you shall see,

And written, in the speech ye
speak yourself,
"Cast me away!" And sad was
Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin coun-
sell'd him,
"Take thou and strike! the time to
cast away
Is yet far-off." So this great brand
the king
Took, and by this will beat his foe-
men down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but
thought
To sift his doubtings to the last,
and ask'd,
Fixing full eyes of question on her
face,
'The swallow and the swift are
near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble
prince,
Being his own dear sister'; and
she said,
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne
am I';
'And therefore Arthur's sister?'
ask'd the King.
She answer'd, 'These be secret
things,' and sign'd
To those two sons to pass and let
them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking
into song
Sprang out, and follow'd by his
flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he
saw :
But Modred laid his ear beside the
doors,
And there half heard; the same
that afterward
Struck for the throne, and striking
found his doom.

And then the Queen made
answer, 'What know I ?
For dark my mother was in eyes
and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I ;
and dark
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was
Uther, too,

Wellnigh to blackness; but this
king is fair
Beyond the race of Britons and of
men.
Moreover, always in my mind I
hear
A cry from out the dawning of my
life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her
say,
'O that ye had some brother,
pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways
of the world.'"

'Ay,' said the King, 'and hear
ye such a cry ?
But when did Arthur chance upon
thee first ?'

'O king!' she cried, 'and I
will tell thee true :
He found me first when yet a
little maid :
Beaten I had been for a little
fault
Whereof I was not guilty ; and out
I ran
And flung myself down on a bank
of heath,
And hated this fair world and all
therein,
And wept, and wish'd that I were
dead ; and he—
I know not whether of himself he
came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they
say, can walk
Unseen at pleasure—he was at my
side,
And spake sweet words, and com-
forted my heart,
And dried my tears, being a child
with me.
And many a time he came, and
evermore
As I grew greater grew with me ;
and sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with
him was I,
Stern, too, at times, and then I
loved him not,
But sweet again, and then I loved
him well.

And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for me,
For then I surely thought he would be king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale :
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage,
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died, and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still king, and passing forth to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the waves was in a flame :

And down the wave and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stooped and caught the babe, and cried "The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!" And the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars: "And this same child," he said,
"Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
Till this were told." And saying this the seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
In riddling triplets of old time, and said :

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.
Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.
Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows :

Sun, rain, and sun ! and where is
he who knows ?
From the great deep to the great
deep he goes."

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me;
but thou
Fear not to give this king thine
only child,
Guinevere : so great bards of him
will sing
Hereafter ; and dark sayings from
of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the
minds of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside
their fires
For comfort after their wage-work
is done,
Speak of the king ; and Merlin in
our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and
sworn
Tho' men may wound him that he
will not die,
But pass, again to come ; and then
or now
Utterly smite the heathen under-
foot,
Till these and all men hail him for
their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran
rejoiced,
But musing 'Shall I answer yea
or nay ?'
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded
and slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that
ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height,
the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phan-
tom king,
Now looming, and now lost ; and
on the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the
herd was driven,
Fire glimpsed ; and all the land
from roof and rick,
In drifts of smoke before a rolling
wind,
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled
with the haze

And made it thicker ; while the
phantom king
Sent out at times a voice ; and here
or there
Stood one who pointed toward the
voice, the rest
Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No
king of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of
ours' ;
Till with a wink his dream was
changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth be-
came
As nothing, and the king stood out
in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke,
and sent
Ulfus, and Brastias and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur an-
swering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior
whom he loved
And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot,
to ride forth
And bring the Queen ;—and
watch'd him from the gates :
And Lancelot past away among
the flowers
(For then was latter April), and
return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with
Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the
high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and
before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines,
the king
That morn was married, while in
stainless white,
The fair beginners of a nobler
time,
And glorying in their vows and
him, his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in
his joy.
And holy Dubric spread his hands
and spake,
'Reign ye, and live and love, and
make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one
with thee,

And all this Order of thy Table
Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of
their king.'

Then at the marriage feast came
in from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the
world,
Great lords, who claim'd the tri-
bute as of yore.
But Arthur spake, 'Behold, for
these have sworn
To fight my wars, and worship me
their king;
The old order changeth, yielding
place to new;
And we that fight for our fair
father Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak
and old
To drive the heathen from your
Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay': so those
great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur
strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood
for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that
strength the king
Drew in the petty princedoms
under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles
overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a
realm and reign'd.

ENID

THE brave Geraint, a knight of
Arthur's court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great order of the Table
Round,
Had married Enid, Yniol's only
child,
And loved her, as he loved the
light of Heaven.
And as the light of Heaven varies,
now

At sunrise, now at sunset, now by
night
With moon and trembling stars,
so loved Geraint
To make her beauty vary day by
day,
In crimsons and in purples and in
gems.
And Enid, but to please her hus-
band's eye,
Who first had found and loved her
in a state
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted
him
In some fresh splendour; and the
Queen herself,
Grateful to Prince Geraint for
service done,
Loved her, and often with her own
white hands
Array'd and deck'd her, as the
loveliest,
Next after her own self, in all the
court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and
with true heart
Adored her, as the stateliest and
the best
And loveliest of all women upon
earth.
And seeing them so tender and so
close,
Long in their common love re-
joiced Geraint.
But when a rumour rose about the
Queen,
Touching her guilty love for
Lancelot,
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor
yet was heard
The world's loud whisper breaking
into storm,
Not less Geraint believed it; and
there fell
A horror on him, lest his gentle
wife,
Thro' that great tenderness for
Guinevere,
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any
taint
In nature: wherefore going to the
king,
He made this pretext, that his
princedom lay

Close on the borders of a territory,
 Wherein were bandit earls, and
 caitiff knights,
 Assassins, and all flyers from the
 hand
 Of Justice, and whatever loathes
 a law :
 And therefore, till the king himself
 should please
 To cleanse this common sewer of
 all his realm,
 He craved a fair permission to
 depart,
 And there defend his marches;
 and the king
 Mused for a little on his plea, but,
 last,
 Allowing it, the Prince and Enid
 rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them,
 to the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their
 own land;
 Where, thinking, that if ever yet
 was wife
 True to her lord, mine shall be so
 to me,
 He compass'd her with sweet
 observances
 And worship, never leaving her,
 and grew
 Forgetful of his promise to the
 king,
 Forgetful of the falcon and the
 hunt,
 Forgetful of the tilt and tourna-
 ment,
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,
 Forgetful of his principedom and its
 cares.
 And this forgetfulness was hateful
 to her.
 And by and by the people, when
 they met
 In twos and threes, or fuller
 companies,
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble
 of him
 As of a prince whose manhood was
 all gone,
 And molten down in mere uxori-
 ousness.
 And this she gather'd from the
 people's eyes :

This too the women who attired
 her head,
 To please her, dwelling on his
 boundless love,
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her
 the more :
 And day by day she thought to
 tell Geraint,
 But could not out of bashful
 delicacy ;
 While he that watch'd her sadden,
 was the more
 Suspicious that her nature had a
 taint.

At last, it chanced that on a
 summer morn
 (They sleeping each by other) the
 new sun
 Beat thro' the blindless casement
 of the room,
 And heated the strong warrior in
 his dreams ;
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet
 aside,
 And bared the knotted column of
 his throat,
 The massive square of his heroic
 breast,
 And arms on which the standing
 muscle sloped,
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
 stone,
 Running too vehemently to break
 upon it.
 And Enid woke and sat beside the
 couch,
 Admiring him, and thought within
 herself,
 Was ever man so grandly made
 as he ?
 Then, like a shadow, past the
 people's talk
 And accusation of uxori-
 ousness
 Across her mind, and bowing over
 him,
 Low to her own heart piteously
 she said :

'O noble breast and all-puissant
 arms,
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause
 that men

Reproach you, saying all your
 force is gone?
 I *am* the cause because I dare not
 speak
 And tell him what I think and
 what they say.
 And yet I hate that he should
 linger here;
 I cannot love my lord and not his
 name.
 Far liefer had I gird his harness
 on him,
 And ride with him to battle and
 stand by,
 And watch his mightful hand
 striking great blows
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the
 world.
 Far better were I laid in the dark
 earth,
 Not hearing any more his noble
 voice,
 Not to be folded more in these
 dear arms,
 And darken'd from the high light
 in his eyes,
 Than that my lord thro' me should
 suffer shame.
 Am I so bold, and could I so stand
 by,
 And see my dear lord wounded in
 the strife,
 Or maybe pierced to death before
 mine eyes,
 And yet not dare to tell him what
 I think,
 And how men slur him, saying all
 his force
 Is melted into mere effeminacy?
 O me, I fear that I am no true
 wife.'

Half inwardly, half audibly she
 spoke,
 And the strong passion in her
 made her weep
 True tears upon his broad and
 naked breast,
 And these awoke him, and by
 great mischance
 He heard but fragments of her
 later words,
 And that she fear'd she was not a
 true wife.

And then he thought, 'In spite of
 all my care,
 For all my pains, poor man, for
 all my pains,
 She is not faithful to me, and I
 see her
 Weeping for some gay knight in
 Arthur's hall.'
 Then tho' he loved and revered
 her too much
 To dream she could be guilty of
 foul act,
 Right thro' his manful breast
 darted the pang
 That makes a man, in the sweet
 face of her
 Whom he loves most, lonely and
 miserable.
 At this he hurl'd his huge limbs
 out of bed,
 And shook his drowsy squire
 awake and cried,
 'My charger and her palfrey,' then
 to her,
 'I will ride forth into the wilderness;
 For tho' it seems my spurs are yet
 to win,
 I have not fall'n so low as some
 would wish.
 And you, put on your worst and
 meanest dress
 And ride with me.' And Enid
 ask'd, amazed,
 'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
 fault.'
 But he, 'I charge you, ask not but
 obey.'
 Then she bethought her of a faded
 silk,
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,
 And moving toward a cedarn
 cabinet,
 Wherein she kept them folded
 reverently
 With sprigs of summer laid be-
 tween the folds,
 She took them, and array'd herself
 therein,
 Remembering when first he came
 on her
 Drest in that dress, and how he
 loved her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the
 dress,

And all his journey to her, as
himself
Had told her, and their coming to
the court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide
before
Held court at old Caerleon upon
Usk.

There on a day, he sitting high in
hall,

Before him came a forester of
Dean,

Wet from the woods, with notice
of a hart

Taller than all his fellows, milky-
white,

First seen that day : these things
he told the king.

Then the good king gave order to
let blow

His horns for hunting on the
morrow morn.

And when the Queen petition'd for
his leave

To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
So with the morning all the court
were gone.

But Guinevere lay late into the
morn,

Lost in sweet dreams, and dream-
ing of her love

For Lancelot, and forgetful of the
hunt;

But rose at last, a single maiden
with her,

Took horse, and forded Usk, and
gain'd the wood;

There, on a little knoll beside it,
stay'd

Waiting to hear the hounds; but
heard instead

A sudden sound of hoofs, for
Prince Geraint,

Late also, wearing neither hunting-
dress

Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted
brand,

Came quickly flashing thro' the
shallow ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up
the knoll.

A purple scarf, at either end
whereof

There swung an apple of the purest
gold,

Sway'd round about him, as he
gallop'd up

To join them, glancing like a
dragon-fly

In summer suit and silks of holiday.
Low bow'd the tributary Prince,

and she,
Sweetly and statelily, and with all
grace

Of womanhood and queenhood,
answer'd him :

'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said,
'later than we!'

'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd,
'and so late

That I but come like you to see
the hunt,

Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with
me,' she said;

'For on this little knoll, if any-
where,

There is good chance that we shall
hear the hounds :

Here often they break covert at
our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the
distant hunt,

And chiefly for the baying of
Cavall,

King Arthur's hound of deepest
mouth, there rode

Full slowly by a knight, lady, and
dwarf;

Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest,
and the knight

Had visor up, and show'd a youth-
ful face,

Imperious, and of haughtiest linea-
ments.

And Guinevere, not mindful of his
face

In the king's hall, desired his
name, and sent

Her maiden to demand it of the
dwarf;

Who being vicious, old and
irritable,

And doubling all his master's vice
of pride,

Made answer sharply that she
should not know.

'Then will I ask it of himself,' she
 said.
 'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,'
 cried the dwarf;
 'Thou art not worthy ev'n to
 speak of him;'
 And when she put her horse
 toward the knight,
 Struck at her with his whip, and
 she return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; at which
 Geraint
 Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn
 the name,'
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and
 ask'd it of him,
 Who answer'd as before; and when
 the Prince
 Had put his horse in motion
 toward the knight,
 Struck at him with his whip, and
 cut his cheek.
 The Prince's blood spirted upon
 the scarf,
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinc-
 tive hand
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish
 him:
 But he, from his exceeding man-
 fulness
 And pure nobility of temperament,
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,
 refrain'd
 From ev'n a word, and so return-
 ing said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble
 Queen,
 Done in your maiden's person to
 yourself:
 And I will track this vermin to
 their earths:
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not
 doubt
 To find, at some place I shall come
 at, arms
 On loan, or else for pledge; and,
 being found,
 Then will I fight him, and will
 break his pride,
 And on the third day, will again
 be here,
 So that I be not fall'n in fight.
 Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd
 the stately Queen.
 'Be prosperous in this journey, as
 in all;
 And may you light on all things
 that you love,
 And live to wed with her whom
 first you love:
 But ere you wed with any, bring
 your bride,
 And I, were she the daughter of
 a king,
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from
 the hedge,
 Will clothe her for her bridals like
 the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now think-
 ing that he heard
 The noble hart at bay, now the far
 horn,
 A little vext at losing of the
 hunt,
 A little at the vile occasion,
 rode,
 By ups and downs, thro' many a
 grassy glade
 And valley, with fixt eye following
 the three.
 At last they issued from the world
 of wood,
 And climb'd upon a fair and even
 ridge,
 And show'd themselves against the
 sky, and sank.
 And thither came Geraint, and
 underneath
 Beheld the long street of a little
 town
 In a long valley, on one side of
 which,
 White from the mason's hand, a
 fortress rose;
 And on one side a castle in decay,
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a
 dry ravine:
 And out of town and valley came
 a noise
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly
 bed
 Brawling, or like a clamour of the
 rooks
 At distance, ere they settle for the
 night.

And onward to the fortress rode
 the three,
 And enter'd, and were lost behind
 the walls.
 'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have
 track'd him to his earth.'
 And down the long street riding
 wearily,
 Found every hostel full, and
 everywhere
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the
 hot hiss
 And bustling whistle of the youth
 who scour'd
 His master's armour; and of such
 a one
 He ask'd, 'What means the tumult
 in the town?'
 Who told him, scouring still, 'The
 sparrow-hawk!'
 Then riding close behind an ancient
 churl,
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping
 beam,
 Went sweating underneath a sack
 of corn,
 Ask'd yet once more what meant
 the hubbub here?
 Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the
 sparrow-hawk.'
 Then riding further past an
 armourer's,
 Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd
 above his work,
 Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
 He put the self-same query, but
 the man
 Not turning round, nor looking at
 him, said:
 'Friend, he that labours for the
 sparrow-hawk
 Has little time for idle questioners.'
 Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden
 spleen:
 'A thousand pips eat up your
 sparrow-hawk!
 Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings
 peck him dead!
 Ye think the rustic cackle of
 your bourg
 The murmur of the world! What
 is it to me?
 O wretched set of sparrows, one
 and all,

Who pipe of nothing but of
 sparrow-hawks!
 Speak, if you be not like the rest,
 hawk-mad,
 Where can I get me harbourage
 for the night?
 And arms, arms, arms to fight my
 enemy? Speak!
 At this the armourer turning all
 amazed
 And seeing one so gay in purple
 silks,
 Came forward with the helmet
 yet in hand
 And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O
 stranger knight;
 We hold a tourney here to-morrow
 morn,
 And there is scanty time for half
 the work.
 Arms? truth! I know not: all
 are wanted here.
 Harbourage? truth, good truth,
 I know not, save,
 It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er
 the bridge
 Yonder.' He spoke and fell to
 work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little
 spleenful yet,
 Across the bridge that spann'd
 the dry ravine.
 There musing sat the hoary-
 headed Earl,
 (His dress a suit of fray'd magni-
 ficence,
 Once fit for feasts of ceremony)
 and said:
 'Whither, fair son?' to whom
 Geraint replied,
 'O friend, I seek a harbourage
 for the night.'
 Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and
 partake
 The slender entertainment of a
 house
 Once rich, now poor, but ever
 open-door'd.'
 'Thanks, venerable friend,' re-
 plied Geraint;
 'So that you do not serve me
 sparrow-hawks
 For supper, I will enter, I will eat

With all the passion of a twelve
hours' fast.
Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-
headed Earl,
And answer'd, 'Graver cause
than yours is mine
To curse this hedgerow thief,
the sparrow-hawk:
But in, go in; for save yourself
desire it,
We will not touch upon him ev'n
in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the
castle court,
His charger trampling many a
prickly star
Of sprouted thistle on the broken
stones.
He look'd and saw that all was
ruinous.
Here stood a shatter'd archway
plumed with fern;
And here had fall'n a great part
of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles
from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with
wilding flowers:
And high above a piece of turret
stair,
Worn by the feet that now were
silent, wound
Bare to the sun, and monstrous
ivy-stems
Claspt the grey walls with hairy-
fibred arms,
And suck'd the joining of the
stones, and look'd
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft,
a grove.

And while he waited in the
castle court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's
daughter, rang
Clear thro' the open casement of
the Hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of
a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of
bird it is
That sings so delicately clear, and
make

Conjecture of the plumage and the
form;
So the sweet voice of Enid moved
Geraint;
And made him like a man abroad
at morn
When first the liquid note beloved
of men
Comes flying over many a windy
wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd
with green and red,
And he suspends his converse with
a friend,
Or it may be the labour of his
hands,
To think or say, 'There is the
nightingale;'
So fared it with Geraint, who
thought and said,
'Here, by God's grace, is the one
voice for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid
sang was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and
Enid sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel
and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sun-
shine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither
love nor hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel
with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up
or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts
are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords
of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of
our own hands;
For man is man and master of his
fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the
staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows
in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither
love nor hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song you
 may learn the nest,'
 Said Yniol; 'Enter quickly.' Enter-
 ing then,
 Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen
 stones,
 The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd
 Hall,
 He found an ancient dame in dim
 brocade;
 And near her, like a blossom ver-
 meil-white,
 That lightly breaks a faded flower-
 sheath,
 Moved the fair Enid, all in faded
 silk,
 Her daughter. In a moment
 thought Geraint,
 'Here by God's rood is the one
 maid for me.'
 But none spake word except the
 hoary Earl:
 'Enid, the good knight's horse
 stands in the court;
 Take him to stall, and give him
 corn, and then
 Go to the town and buy us flesh
 and wine;
 And we will make us merry as we
 may.
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts
 are great.'

He spake: the Prince, as Enid
 past him, fain
 To follow, strode a stride, but
 Yniol caught
 His purple scarf, and held, and
 said, 'Forbear!
 Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd,
 O my Son,
 Endures not that her guest should
 serve himself.'
 And reverencing the custom of the
 house
 Geraint, from utter courtesy,
 forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the
 stall;
 And after went her way across the
 bridge,
 And reach'd the town, and while
 the Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again
 with one,
 A youth, that following with a
 costrel bore
 The means of goodly welcome,
 flesh and wine.
 And Enid brought sweet cakes to
 make them cheer,
 And in her veil enfolded, manchet
 bread.
 And then, because their hall must
 also serve
 For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and
 spread the board,
 And stood behind, and waited on
 the three.
 And seeing her so sweet and
 serviceable,
 Geraint had longing in him ever-
 more
 To stoop and kiss the tender little
 thumb,
 That crost the trencher as she laid
 it down:
 But after all had eaten, then
 Geraint,
 For now the wine made summer
 in his veins,
 Let his eye rove in following, or
 rest
 On Enid at her lowly handmaid-
 work,
 Now here, now there, about the
 dusky hall;
 Then suddenly address the hoary
 Earl:

'Fair Host and Earl, I pray
 your courtesy;
 This sparrow-hawk, what is he,
 tell me of him.
 His name? but no, good faith,
 I will not have it:
 For if he be the knight whom
 late I saw
 Ride into that new fortress by
 your town,
 White from the mason's hand,
 then have I sworn
 From his own lips to have it—
 I am Geraint
 Of Devon—for this morning
 when the Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand
 the name,
 His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen
 thing,
 Struck at her with a whip, and
 she return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; and then
 I swore
 That I would track this caitiff
 to his hold.
 And fight and break his pride
 and have it of him.
 And all unarm'd I rode, and
 thought to find
 Arms in your town, where all
 the men are mad;
 They take the rustic murmur
 of their bourg
 For the great wave that echoes
 round the world;
 They would not hear me speak:
 but if you know
 Where I can light on arms, or
 if yourself
 Should have them, tell me, seeing
 I have sworn
 That I will break his pride and
 learn his name,
 Avenging this great insult done
 the Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol, 'Art
 thou he indeed,
 Geraint, a name far-sounded
 among men
 For noble deeds? and truly I,
 when first
 I saw you moving by me on the
 bridge,
 Felt you were somewhat, yea
 and by your state
 And presence might have guess'd
 you one of those
 That eat in Arthur's hall at
 Camelot.
 Nor speak I now from foolish
 flattery;
 For this dear child hath often
 heard me praise
 Your feats of arms, and often
 when I paused
 Hath ask'd again, and ever loved
 to hear;

So grateful is the noise of noble
 deeds
 To noble hearts who see but acts
 of wrong:
 O never yet had woman such a
 pair
 Of suitors as this maiden; first
 Limours,
 A creature wholly given to brawls
 and wine,
 Drunk even when he woo'd; and
 be he dead
 I know not, but he past to the
 wild land.
 The second was your foe, the
 sparrow-hawk,
 My curse, my nephew—I will
 not let his name
 Slip from my lips if I can help
 it—he,
 When I that knew him fierce and
 turbulent
 Refused her to him, then his
 pride awoke;
 And since the proud man often
 is the mean,
 He sow'd a slander in the common
 ear,
 Affirming that his father left him
 gold,
 And in my charge, which was not
 render'd to him;
 Bribed with large promises the
 men who served
 About my person, the more
 easily
 Because my means were somewhat
 broken into
 Thro' open doors and hospital-
 ity;
 Raised my own town against me
 in the night
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd
 my house;
 From mine own earldom foully
 ousted me;
 Built that new fort to overawe
 my friends,
 For truly there are those who
 love me yet;
 And keeps me in this ruinous
 castle here,
 Where doubtless he would put me
 soon to death,

But that his pride too much
despises me :
And I myself sometimes despise
myself ;
For I have let men be, and have
their way ;
Am much too gentle, have not
used my power :
Nor know I whether I be very
base
Or very manful, whether very
wise
Or very foolish ; only this I
know,
That whatsoever evil happen to
me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or
limb,
But can endure it all most
patiently,'

'Well said, true heart,' replied
Geraint, 'but arms :
That if, as I suppose, your nephew
fights
In next day's tourney I may break
his pride.'

And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms,
indeed, but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince
Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore at your
asking, yours.
But in this tournament can no man
tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be
there.
Two forks are fixt into the meadow
ground,
And over these is laid a silver
wand,
And over that is placed the
sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest
there.
And this, what knight soever be in
field
Lays claim to for the lady at his
side,
And tilts with my good nephew
thereupon,
Who being apt at arms and big of
bone

Has ever won it for the lady with
him,
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earn'd himself the name of
sparrow-hawk.
But you, that have no lady, can-
not fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all
bright replied,
Leaning a little toward him, 'Your
leave !
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble
host,
For this dear child, because I
never saw,
Tho' having seen all beauties of
our time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so
fair.
And if I fall her name will yet
remain
Untarnish'd as before ; but if I
live,
So aid me Heaven when at mine
uttermost,
As I will make her truly my true
wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's
heart
Danced in his bosom, seeing better
days.
And looking round he saw not
Enid there,
(Who hearing her own name had
slipt away)
But that old dame, to whom full
tenderly
And fondling all her hand in his
he said,
'Mother, a maiden is a tender
thing,
And best by her that bore her
understood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go
to rest
Tell her, and prove her heart
toward the Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted
Earl, and she
With frequent smile and nod de-
parting found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the
 girl;
 Whom first she kiss'd on either
 cheek, and then
 On either shining shoulder laid a
 hand,
 And kept her off and gazed upon
 her face,
 And told her all their converse in
 the hall,
 Proving her heart : but never light
 and shade
 Coursed one another more on open
 ground
 Beneath a troubled heaven, than
 red and pale
 Across the face of Enid hearing her;
 While slowly falling as a scale that
 falls,
 When weight is added only grain
 by grain,
 Sank her sweet head upon her
 gentle breast;
 Nor did she lift an eye nor speak
 a word,
 Rapt in the fear and in the wonder
 of it;
 So moving without answer to her
 rest
 She found no rest, and ever fail'd
 to draw
 The quiet night into her blood, but
 lay
 Contemplating her own unworthi-
 ness;
 And when the pale and bloodless
 east began
 To quicken to the sun, arose, and
 raised
 Her mother too, and hand in hand
 they moved
 Down to the meadow where the
 jousts were held,
 And waited there for Yniol and
 Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and
 when Geraint
 Beheld her first in field, awaiting
 him,
 He felt, were she the prize of
 bodily force,
 Himself beyond the rest pushing
 could move

The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted
 arms
 Were on his princely person, but
 thro' these
 Princelike his bearing shone; and
 errant knights
 And ladies came, and by and by
 the town
 Flow'd in, and settling circled all
 the lists.
 And there they fixt the forks into
 the ground,
 And over these they placed a silver
 wand
 And over that a golden sparrow-
 hawk.
 Then Yniol's nephew, after trum-
 pet blown,
 Spake to the lady with him and
 proclaim'd,
 'Advance and take as fairest of the
 fair,
 For I these two years past have
 won it for thee,
 The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake
 the Prince,
 'Forbear: there is a worthier,'
 and the knight
 With some surprise and thrice
 as much disdain
 Turn'd, and beheld the four, and
 all his face
 Glow'd like the heart of a great
 fire at Yule,
 So burnt he was with passion,
 crying out,
 'Do battle for it then,' no more;
 and thrice
 They clash'd together, and thrice
 they brake their spears.
 Then each, dishorsed and drawing,
 lash'd at each
 So often and with such blows,
 that all the crowd
 Wonder'd, and now and then
 from distant walls
 There came a clapping as of
 phantom hands.
 So twice they fought, and twice
 they breathed, and still
 The dew of their great labour,
 and the blood
 Of their strong bodies, flowing,
 drain'd their force.

But either's force was matched
 till Yniol's cry,
 Remember that great insult done
 the Queen,
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved
 his blade aloft,
 And crack'd the helmet thro',
 and bit the bone,
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon
 his breast,
 And said, 'Thy name?' 'To whom
 the fallen man
 Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn,
 son of Nudd!
 Ashamed am I that I should tell
 it thee.
 My pride is broken: men have
 seen my fall.'
 'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,'
 replied Geraint,
 'These two things shalt thou do,
 or else thou diest.
 First, thou thyself, thy lady, and
 thy dwarf,
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and
 being there,
 Crave pardon for that insult done
 the Queen,
 And shalt abide her judgment
 on it; next,
 Thou shalt give back their earldom
 to thy kin.
 These two things shalt thou do,
 or thou shalt die.'
 And Edyrn answer'd, 'These
 things will I do,
 For I have never yet been over-
 thrown,
 And thou hast overthrown me,
 and my pride
 Is broken down, for Enid sees
 my fall!
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's
 court,
 And there the Queen forgave him
 easily.
 And being young, he changed
 himself, and grew
 To hate the sin that seem'd so
 like his own
 Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and
 fell at last
 In the great battle fighting for
 the king.

But when the third day from
 the hunting-morn
 Made a low splendour in the world,
 and wings
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
 With her fair head in the dim-
 yellow light,
 Among the dancing shadows of
 the birds,
 Woke and bethought her of her
 promise given
 No later than last eve to Prince
 Geraint—
 So bent he seem'd on going the
 third day,
 He would not leave her, till her
 promise given—
 To ride with him this morning
 to the court,
 And there be made known to the
 stately Queen,
 And there be wedded with all
 ceremony.
 At this she cast her eyes upon
 her dress,
 And thought it never yet had
 look'd so mean.
 For as a leaf in mid-November is
 To what it was in mid-October,
 seem'd
 The dress that now she look'd
 on to the dress
 She look'd on ere the coming
 of Geraint.
 And still she look'd, and still the
 terror grew
 Of that strange bright and dread-
 ful thing, a court,
 All staring at her in her faded silk:
 And softly to her own sweet heart
 she said:

'This noble prince who won our
 earldom back,
 So splendid in his acts and his
 attire,
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall
 discredit him!
 Would he could tarry with us here
 awhile!
 But being so beholden to the
 Prince,
 It were but little grace in any of
 us,

Bent as he seem'd on going this
 third day,
 To seek a second favour at his
 hands.
 Yet if he could but tarry a day
 or two,
 Myself would work eye dim, and
 finger lame,
 Far liefer than so much discredit
 him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
 All branch'd and flower'd with
 gold, a costly gift
 Of her good mother, given her on
 the night
 Before her birthday, three sad
 years ago,
 That night of fire, when Edyrn
 sack'd their house,
 And scatter'd all they had to all
 the winds:
 For while the mother show'd it,
 and the two
 Were turning and admiring it,
 the work
 To both appear'd so costly, rose
 a cry
 That Edyrn's men were on them,
 and they fled
 With little save the jewels they
 had on,
 Which being sold and sold had
 bought them bread:
 And Edyrn's men had caught
 them in their flight,
 And placed them in this ruin; and
 she wish'd
 The Prince had found her in her
 ancient home;
 Then let her fancy flit across the
 past,
 And roam the goodly places that
 she knew;
 And last bethought her how she
 used to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of
 golden carp;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd
 and lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of
 the pool;
 And half asleep she made com-
 parison

Of that and these to her own faded
 self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep
 again;
 And dreamt herself was such a
 faded form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the
 pool;
 But this was in the garden of a
 king;
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool,
 she knew
 That all was bright; that all about
 were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-
 work;
 That all the turf was rich in
 plots that look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;
 And lords and ladies of the high
 court went
 In silver tissue talking things of
 state;
 And children of the king in cloth
 of gold
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd
 down the walks;
 And while she thought 'they will
 not see me,' came
 A stately Queen whose name was
 Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth
 of gold
 Ran to her, crying, 'If we have
 fish at all
 Let them be gold; and charge
 the gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from
 the pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die.'
 And therewithal one came and
 seized on her,
 And Enid started waking, with
 her heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish
 dream,
 And lo! it was her mother grasp-
 ing her
 To get her well awake; and in
 her hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which
 she laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke
 exultingly:

'See here, my child, how fresh
the colours look,
How fast they hold like colours
of a shell
That keeps the wear and polish
of the wave.
Why not? it never yet was worn,
I trow:
Look on it, child, and tell me if
you know it.'

And Enid look'd, but all con-
fused at first,
Could scarce divide it from her
foolish dream:
Then suddenly she knew it and
rejoiced,
And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it;
your good gift,
So sadly lost on that unhappy
night;
Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,'
said the dame,
'And gladly given again this
happy morn.
For when the jousts were ended
yesterday,
Went Yniol thro' the town, and
everywhere
He found the sack and plunder of
our house
All scatter'd thro' the houses of
the town;
And gave command that all which
once was ours,
Should now be ours again: and
yester-eve,
While you were talking sweetly
with your Prince,
Came one with this and laid it in
my hand,
For love or fear, or seeking favour
of us,
Because we have our earldom
back again.
And yester-eve I would not tell
you of it,
But kept it for a sweet surprise
at morn.
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?
For I myself unwillingly have
worn
My faded suit, as you, my child,
have yours,

And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly
house,
With store of rich apparel, sumpt-
uous fare,
And page, and maid, and squire,
and seneschal,
And pastime both of hawk and
hound, and all
That appertains to noble main-
tenance.
Yea, and he brought me to a
goodly house;
But since our fortune slipt from
sun to shade,
And all thro' that young traitor,
cruel need
Constrain'd us, but a better time
has come;
So clothe yourself in this, that
better fits
Our mended fortunes and a
Prince's bride:
For tho' you won the prize of
fairest fair,
And tho' I heard him call you
fairest fair,
Let never maiden think, however
fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes
than old.
And should some great court-lady
say, the Prince
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from
the hedge,
And like a madman brought her
to the court,
Then were you shamed, and, worse,
might shame the Prince
To whom we are beholden; but
I know
When my dear child is set forth
at her best,
That neither court nor country,
tho' they sought
Thro' all the provinces like those
of old
That lighted on Queen Esther,
has her match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother
out of breath;
And Enid listen'd brightening as
she lay;

Then, as the white and glittering
 star of morn
 Parts from a bank of snow, and
 by and by
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
 rose,
 And left her maiden couch, and
 robed herself,
 Help'd by the mother's careful
 hand and eye,
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
 gown;
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter
 round, and said,
 She never yet had seen her half
 so fair;
 And call'd her like that maiden
 in the tale,
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour
 out of flowers,
 And sweeter than the bride of
 Cassivelaun,
 Flur, for whose love the Roman
 Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain, 'but we beat
 him back,
 As this great Prince invaded us,
 and we,
 Not beat him back, but welcomed
 him with joy.
 And I can scarcely ride with you
 to court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways
 and wild;
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft
 shall dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Clothed with my gift, and gay
 among the gay.'

But while the women thus
 rejoiced, Geraint
 Woke where he slept in the high
 hall, and call'd
 For Enid, and when Yniol made
 report
 Of that good mother making
 Enid gay
 In such apparel as might well
 beseem
 His princess, or indeed the stately
 queen,
 He answer'd; 'Earl, entreat her
 by my love,

Albeit I give no reason but my
 wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded
 silk.'
 Yniol with that hard message
 went; it fell,
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty
 corn:
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew
 not why,
 Dared not to glance at her good
 mother's face,
 But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping
 her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-
 broider'd gift,
 And robed them in her ancient
 suit again
 And so descended. Never man
 rejoiced
 More than Geraint to greet her
 thus attired;
 And glancing all at once as keenly
 at her,
 As careful robins eye the delver's
 toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either
 eyelid fall,
 But rested with her sweet face
 satisfied;
 Then seeing cloud upon the
 mother's brow,
 Her by both hands he caught,
 and sweetly said:

'O my new mother, be not
 wroth or grieved
 At your new son, for my petition
 to her.
 When late I left Caerleon, our
 great Queen,
 In words whose echo lasts, they
 were so sweet,
 Made promise, that whatever
 bride I brought,
 Herself would clothe her like the
 sun in Heaven.
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this
 ruin'd hold,
 Beholding one so bright in dark
 estate,
 I vow'd that could I gain her, our
 kind Queen,

No hand but hers, should make
 your Enid burst
 Sunlike from cloud—and likewise
 thought perhaps,
 That service done so graciously
 would bind
 The two together; for I wish
 the two
 To love each other: how should
 Enid find
 A nobler friend? Another thought
 I had;
 I came among you here so sud-
 denly,
 That tho' her gentle presence at
 the lists
 Might well have served for proof
 that I was loved,
 I doubted whether filial tenderness,
 Or easy nature, did not let itself
 Be moulded by your wishes for
 her weal;
 Or whether some false sense in
 her own self
 Of my contrasting brightness,
 overbore
 Her fancy dwelling in this dusky
 hall;
 And such a sense might make her
 long for court
 And all its dangerous glories: and
 I thought,
 That could I someway prove such
 force in her
 Link'd with such love for me,
 that at a word
 (No reason given her) she could
 cast aside
 A splendour dear to women, new
 to her,
 And therefore dearer; or if not
 so new,
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by
 the power
 Of intermitted custom; then I felt
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs
 and flows,
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore,
 I do rest,
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,
 That never shadow of mistrust
 can cross
 Between us. Grant me pardon
 for my thoughts:

And for my strange petition I
 will make
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-
 day,
 When your fair child shall wear
 your costly gift
 Beside your own warm hearth,
 with, on her knees,
 Who knows? another gift of the
 high God,
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd
 to lisp you thanks.'

He spoke: the mother smiled,
 but half in tears,
 Then brought a mantle down
 and wrapt her in it,
 And claspt and kiss'd her, and
 they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guin-
 evere had climb'd
 The giant tower, from whose
 high crest, they say,
 Men saw the goodly hills of
 Somerset,
 And white sails flying on the
 yellow sea;
 But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up
 the vale of Usk,
 By the flat meadow, till she saw
 them come;
 And then descending met them
 at the gates,
 Embraced her with all welcome
 as a friend,
 And did her honour as the Prince's
 bride,
 And clothed her for her bridals
 like the sun;
 And all that week was old Caerleon
 gay,
 For by the hands of Dubric, the
 high saint,
 They twain were wedded with all
 ceremony.

And this was on the last year's
 Whitsuntide.
 But Enid ever kept the faded
 silk,
 Remembering how first he came
 on her,

Drest in that dress, and how he
 loved her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about
 the dress,
 And all his journey toward her,
 as himself
 Had told her, and their coming
 to the court.

And now this morning when
 he said to her,
 'Put on your worst and meanest
 dress,' she found
 And took it, and array'd herself
 therein.

O purblind race of miserable
 men,
 How many among us at this very
 hour
 Do forge a life-long trouble for
 ourselves,
 By taking true for false, or false
 for true;
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of
 this world
 Groping, how many, until we
 pass and reach
 That other, where we see as we
 are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who
 issuing forth
 That morning, when they both
 had got to horse,
 Perhaps he loved her passionately,
 And felt that tempest brooding
 round his heart,
 Which if he spoke at all, would
 break perforce
 Upon a head so dear in thunder,
 said :
 'Not at my side. I charge you
 ride before,
 Ever a good way on before; and
 this
 I charge you, on your duty as
 a wife,
 Whatever happens, not to speak
 to me,
 No, not a word!' and Enid was
 aghast;
 And forth they rode, but scarce
 three paces on,

When crying out 'Effeminate as
 I am,
 I will not fight my way with
 gilded arms,
 All shall be iron;' he loosed a
 mighty purse,
 Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it
 toward the squire.
 So that the last sight that Enid
 had of home
 Was all the marble threshold
 flashing, strown
 With gold and scatter'd coinage,
 and the squire
 Chafing his shoulder: then he
 cried again,
 'To the wilds!' and Enid leading
 down the tracks
 Thro' which he bade her lead him
 on, they past
 The marches, and by bandit-
 haunted holds,
 Grey swamps and pools, waste
 places of the hern,
 And wildernesses, perilous paths,
 they rode :
 Round was their pace at first,
 but slacken'd soon :
 A stranger meeting them had
 surely thought
 They rode so slowly and they
 look'd so pale,
 That each had suffer'd some ex-
 ceeding wrong.
 For he was ever saying to him-
 self,
 'O I that wasted time to tend
 upon her,
 To compass her with sweet obser-
 vances,
 To dress her beautifully and keep
 her true'—
 And there he broke the sentence
 in his heart
 Abruptly, as a man upon his
 tongue
 May break it, when his passion
 masters him.
 And she was ever praying the
 sweet heavens
 To save her dear lord whole from
 any wound.
 And ever in her mind she cast
 about

For that unnoticed failing in
 herself,
 Which made him look so cloudy
 and so cold;
 Till the great plover's human
 whistle amazed
 Her heart, and glancing round
 the waste she fear'd
 In every wavering brake an
 ambuscade.
 Then thought again, 'If there be
 such in me,
 I might amend it by the grace of
 heaven,
 If he would only speak and tell
 me of it.'

But when the fourth part of
 the day was gone,
 Then Enid was aware of three tall
 knights
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, be-
 hind a rock
 In shadow, waiting for them,
 caitiffs all;
 And heard one crying to his fellow,
 'Look,
 Here comes a laggard hanging
 down his head,
 Who seems no bolder than a beaten
 hound;
 Come, we will slay him and will
 have his horse
 And armour, and his damsel
 shall be ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her
 heart, and said:
 'I will go back a little to my lord,
 And I will tell him all their caitiff
 talk;
 For he he wroth even to slaying
 me,
 Far liefer by his dear hand had
 I die,
 Than that my lord should suffer
 loss or shame.'

Then she went back some paces
 of return,
 Met his full frown timidly firm,
 and said:
 'My lord, I saw three bandits by
 the rock

Waiting to fall on you, and heard
 them boast
 That they would slay you, and
 possess your horse
 And armour, and your damsel
 should be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer.
 'Did I wish
 Your warning or your silence?
 one command
 I laid upon you, not to speak
 to me,
 And thus you keep it! Well then,
 look—for now,
 Whether you wish me victory
 or defeat,
 Long for my life, or hunger for
 my death,
 Yourself shall see my vigour is
 not lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and
 sorrowful,
 And down upon him bare the
 bandit three.
 And at the midmost charging,
 Prince Geraint
 Drave the long spear a cubit thro'
 his breast
 And out beyond; and then against
 his brace
 Of comrades, each of whom had
 broken on him
 A lance that splintered like an
 icicle,
 Swung from his brand a windy
 buffet out
 Once, twice, to right, to left, and
 stunn'd the twain
 Or slew them, and dismounting
 like a man
 That skins the wild beast after
 slaying him,
 Stript from the three dead wolves
 of woman born
 The three gay suits of armour
 which they wore,
 And let the bodies lie, but bound
 the suits
 Of armour on their horses, each
 on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all
 the three

Together, and said to her, 'Drive
them on
Before you;' and she drove them
thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer : ruth began
to work
Against his anger in him, while
he watch'd
The being he loved best in all
the world,
With difficulty in mild obedience
Driving them on : he fain had
spoken to her,
And loosed in words of sudden
fire the wrath
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt
him all within;
But evermore it seem'd an easier
thing
At once without remorse to strike
her dead,
Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her
own bright face
Accuse her of the least immodesty:
And thus tongue-tied, it made him
wroth the more
That she *could* speak whom his
own ear had heard
Call herself false : and suffering
thus he made
Minutes an age : but in scarce
longer time
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
Before he turn to fall seaward
again,
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch,
behold
In the first shallow shade of a deep
wood,
Before a gloom of stubborn-
shafted oaks,
Three other horsemen waiting,
wholly arm'd,
Whereof one seem'd far larger
than her lord,
And shook her pulses, crying,
'Look, a prize !
Three horses and three goodly
suits of arms,
And all in charge of whom ? a girl :
set on.'
'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder
comes a knight.'

The third, 'A craven; how he
hangs his head.'
The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea,
but one ?
Wait here, and when he passes
fall upon him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart
and said,
'I will abide the coming of my lord,
And I will tell him all their villainy.
My lord is weary with the fight
before,
And they will fall upon him un-
awares.
I needs must disobey him for his
good;
How should I dare obey him to
his harm ?
Needs must I speak, and tho' he
kill me for it,
I save a life dearer to me than
mine.'

And she abode his coming, and
said to him
With timid firmness, 'Have I leave
to speak ?'
He said, 'You take it, speaking,'
and she spoke.

'There lurk three villains yon-
der in the wood,
And each of them is wholly arm'd,
and one
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and
they say
That they will fall upon you while
you pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful
answer back :
'And if there were an hundred in
the wood,
And every man were larger-
limb'd than I,
And all at once should sally out
upon me,
I swear it would not ruffle me so
much
As you that not obey me. Stand
aside,
And if I fall, cleave to the better
man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait
 the event,
 Not dare to watch the combat,
 only breathe
 Short fits of prayer, at every
 stroke a breath.
 And he, she dreaded most, bare
 down upon him.
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ;
 but Geraint's,
 A little in the late encounter
 strain'd,
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's
 corselet home,
 And then brake short, and down
 his enemy roll'd,
 And there lay still ; as he that tells
 the tale,
 Saw once a great piece of a pro-
 montory,
 That had a sapling growing on it, slip
 From the long shore-cliff's windy
 walls to the beach,
 And there lie still, and yet the
 sapling grew :
 So lay the man transfixt. His
 craven pair
 Of comrades, making slower at
 the Prince,
 When now they saw their bulwark
 fallen, stood ;
 On whom the victor, to confound
 them more,
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ;
 for as one,
 That listens near a torrent moun-
 tain-brook,
 All thro' the crash of the near
 cataract hears
 The drumming thunder of the
 huger fall
 At distance, were the soldiers wont
 to hear
 His voice in battle, and be kindled
 by it,
 And foemen scared, like that false
 pair who turn'd
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the
 death
 Themselves had wrought on many
 an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,
 pick'd the lance

That pleased him best, and drew
 from those dead wolves
 Their three gay suits of armour,
 each from each,
 And bound them on their horses,
 each on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the
 three
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive
 them on
 Before you,' and she drove them
 thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still : the
 pain she had
 To keep them in the wild ways of
 the wood,
 Two sets of three laden with jing-
 ling arms,
 Together, served a little to disedge
 The sharpness of that pain about
 her heart :
 And they themselves, like crea-
 tures gently born
 But into bad hands fall'n, and
 now so long
 By bandits groom'd, prick'd their
 light ears, and felt
 Her low firm voice and tender
 government.

So thro' the green gloom of the
 wood they past,
 And issuing under open heavens
 beheld
 A little town with towers, upon a
 rock,
 And close beneath, a meadow
 gemlike chased
 In the brown wild, and mowers
 mowing in it :
 And down a rocky pathway from
 the place
 There came a fair-hair'd youth,
 that in his hand
 Bare victual for the mowers : and
 Geraint
 Had ruth again on Enid looking
 pale :
 Then, moving downward to the
 meadow ground,
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth
 came by him, said,
 'Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is
 so faint.'

'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth;
 'and you,
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is
 coarse,
 And only meet for mowers;' then
 set down
 His basket, and dismounting on
 the sward
 They let the horses graze, and ate
 themselves.
 And Enid took a little delicately,
 Less having stomach for it than
 desire
 To close with her lord's pleasure;
 but Geraint
 Ate all the mowers' victual un-
 awares,
 And when he found all empty, was
 amazed;
 And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten
 all, but take
 A horse and arms for guerdon;
 choose the best.'
 He, reddening in extremity of de-
 light,
 'My lord, you overpay me fifty-
 fold.'
 'You will be all the wealthier,'
 cried the Prince.
 'I take it as free gift, then,' said
 the boy,
 'Not guerdon; for myself can
 easily,
 While your good damsel rests, re-
 turn, and fetch
 Fresh victual for these mowers of
 our Earl;
 For these are his, and all the field
 is his,
 And I myself am his; and I will
 tell him
 How great a man you are: he
 loves to know
 When men of mark are in his
 territory:
 And he will have you to his palace
 here,
 And serve you costlier than with
 mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no
 better fare:
 I never ate with angrier appe-
 tite

Than when I left your mowers
 dinnerless.
 And into no Earl's palace will I
 go.
 I know, God knows, too much of
 palaces!
 And if he want me, let him come
 to me.
 But hire us some fair chamber for
 the night,
 And stalling for the horses, and
 return
 With victual for these men, and
 let us know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the
 glad youth, and went,
 Held his head high, and thought
 himself a knight,
 And up the rocky pathway disap-
 pear'd,
 Leading the horse, and they were
 left alone.

But when the Prince had brought
 his errant eyes
 Home from the rock, sideways he
 let them glance
 At Enid, where she droopt: his
 own false doom,
 That shadow of mistrust should
 never cross
 Betwixt them, came upon him, and
 he sigh'd;
 Then with another humorous ruth
 remark'd
 The lusty mowers labouring din-
 nerless,
 And watch'd the sun blaze on the
 turning scythe,
 And after nodded sleepily in the
 heat.
 But she, remembering her old
 ruin'd hall,
 And all the windy clamour of the
 daws
 About her hollow turret, pluck'd
 the grass
 There growing longest by the
 meadow's edge,
 And into many a listless annulet,
 Now over, now beneath her mar-
 riage ring,

Wove and unwove it, till the boy
 return'd
 And told them of a chamber, and
 they went;
 Where, after saying to her, 'If you
 will,
 Call for the woman of the house,'
 to which
 She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord';
 the two remain'd
 Apart by all the chamber's width,
 and mute
 As creatures voiceless thro' the
 fault of birth,
 Or two wild men supporters of a
 shield,
 Painted, who stare at open space,
 nor glance
 The one at other, parted by the
 shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
 the street,
 And heel against the pavement
 echoing, burst
 Their drowse; and either started
 while the door,
 Push'd from without, drave back-
 ward to the wall,
 And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
 Femininely fair and dissolutely
 pale,
 Her suitor in old years before
 Geraint,
 Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
 Limours.
 He moving up with pliant court-
 liness,
 Greeted Geraint full face, but
 stealthily,
 In the mid-warmth of welcome
 and graspt hand,
 Found Enid with the corner of his
 eye,
 And knew her sitting sad and
 solitary.
 Then cried Geraint for wine and
 goodly cheer
 To feed the sudden guest, and
 sumptuously
 According to his fashion, bad the
 host
 Call in what men soever were his
 friends,

And feast with these in honour of
 their earl;
 'And care not for the cost; the
 cost is mine.'

And wine and food were brought,
 and Earl Limours
 Drank till he jested with all ease,
 and told
 Free tales, and took the word and
 play'd upon it,
 And made it of two colours; for
 his talk,
 When wine and free companions
 kindled him,
 Was wont to glance and sparkle
 like a gem
 Of fifty facets; thus he moved the
 Prince
 To laughter and his comrades to
 applause.
 Then, when the Prince was merry,
 ask'd Limours,
 'Your leave, my lord, to cross the
 room, and speak
 To your good damsel there who
 sits apart,
 And seems so lonely?' 'My free
 leave,' he said;
 'Get her to speak: she does not
 speak to me.'
 Then rose Limours and looking at
 his feet,
 Like him who tries the bridge he
 fears may fall,
 Crost and came near, lifted ador-
 ing eyes,
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd
 whisperingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone
 life,
 Enid my early and my only love,
 Enid the loss of whom has turn'd
 me wild—
 What chance is this? how is it I
 see you here?
 You are in my power at last, are
 in my power.
 Yet fear me not: I call mine own
 self wild,
 But keep a touch of sweet civility
 Here in the heart of waste and
 wilderness.

I thought, but that your father
 came between,
 In former days you saw me
 favourably.
 And if it were so do not keep it
 back :
 Make me a little happier : let me
 know it :
 Owe you me nothing for a life
 half-lost ?
 Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of
 all you are.
 And, Enid, you and he, I see it
 with joy—
 You sit apart, you do not speak to
 him,
 You come with no attendance,
 page or maid,
 To serve you—does he love you as
 of old ?
 For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I
 know
 Tho' men may bicker with the
 things they love,
 They would not make them laugh-
 able in all eyes,
 Not while they loved them; and
 your wretched dress,
 A wretched insult on you, dumbly
 speaks
 Your story, that this man loves
 you no more.
 Your beauty is no beauty to him
 now :
 A common chance—right well I
 know it—pall'd—
 For I know men : nor will you win
 him back,
 For the man's love once gone
 never returns.
 But here is one who loves you as
 of old ;
 With more exceeding passion than
 of old :
 Good, speak the word : my fol-
 lowers ring him round :
 He sits unarm'd ; I hold a finger
 up ;
 They understand : no ; I do not
 mean blood :
 Nor need you look so scared at
 what I say :
 My malice is no deeper than a
 moat,

No stronger than a wall : there is
 the keep ;
 He shall not cross us more ; speak
 but the word :
 Or speak it not ; but then by Him
 that made me
 The one true lover which you ever
 had,
 I will make use of all the power I
 have.
 O pardon me ! the madness of that
 hour,
 When first I parted from you,
 moves me yet.'

At this the tender sound of his
 own voice
 And sweet self-pity, or the fancy
 of it,
 Made his eye moist ; but Enid
 fear'd his eyes,
 Moist as they were, wine-heated
 from the feast ;
 And answer'd with such craft as
 women use,
 Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a
 chance
 That breaks upon them perilously,
 and said :

'Earl, if you love me as in former
 years,
 And do not practise on me, come
 with morn,
 And snatch me from him as by
 violence ;
 Leave me to-night : I am weary to
 the death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his
 brandish'd plume
 Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-
 amorous Earl,
 And the stout Prince bad him a
 loud good-night,
 He moving homeward babbled to
 his men,
 How Enid never loved a man but
 him,
 Nor cared a broken egg-shell for
 her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince
 Geraint,

Debating his command of silence
 given,
 And that she now perforce must
 violate it,
 Held commune with herself, and
 while she held
 He fell asleep, and Enid had no
 heart
 To wake him, but hung o'er him,
 wholly pleased
 To find him yet unwounded after
 fight,
 And hear him breathing low and
 equally.
 Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,
 heap'd
 The pieces of his armour in one
 place,
 All to be there against a sudden
 need;
 Then dozed awhile herself, but
 overtoil'd
 By that day's grief and travel,
 ever more
 Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn
 and then
 Went slipping down horrible preci-
 pices,
 And strongly striking out her limbs
 awoke;
 Then thought she heard the wild
 Earl at the door,
 With all his rout of random fol-
 lowers,
 Sound on a dreadful trumpet,
 summoning her;
 Which was the red cock shouting
 to the light,
 As the grey dawn stole o'er the
 dewy world,
 And glimmer'd on his armour in the
 room.
 And once again she rose to look at
 it,
 But touch'd it unawares: jang-
 ling, the casque
 Fell, and he started up and stared
 at her.
 Then breaking his command of
 silence given,
 She told him all that Earl Limours
 had said,
 Except the passage that he loved
 her not;

Nor left untold the craft herself
 had used;
 But ended with apology so
 sweet,
 Low-spoken, and of so few words,
 and seem'd
 So justified by that necessity,
 That tho' he thought 'was it for
 him she wept
 In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful
 groan,
 Saying, 'Your sweet faces make
 good fellows fools
 And traitors. Call the host and
 bid him bring
 Charger and palfrey.' So she glided
 out
 Among the heavy breathings of
 the house,
 And like a household Spirit at the
 walls
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers,
 and returned:
 Then tending her rough lord, tho'
 all unask'd,
 In silence, did him service as a
 squire;
 Till issuing arm'd he found the
 host and cried,
 'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere
 he learnt it, 'Take
 Five horses and their armours';
 and the host,
 Suddenly honest, answer'd in
 amaze,
 'My lord, I scarce have spent the
 worth of one!'
 'You will be all the wealthier,'
 said the Prince,
 And then to Enid, 'Forward! and
 to-day
 I charge you, Enid, more espe-
 cially,
 What thing soever you may hear,
 or see,
 Or fancy (tho' I count it of small
 use
 To charge you) that you speak
 not but obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my
 lord, I know
 Your wish, and would obey; but
 riding first,

I hear the violent threats you do
not hear,
I see the danger which you cannot
see :
Then not to give you warning, that
seems hard ;
Almost beyond me : yet I would
obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it : be not
too wise ;
Seeing that you are wedded to a man,
Not quite mismated with a yawn-
ing clown,
But one with arms to guard his
head and yours,
With eyes to find you out however
far,
And ears to hear you even in his
dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd
as keenly at her
As careful robins eye the delver's
toil ;
And that within her, which a
wanton fool,
Or hasty judger would have call'd
her guilt,
Made her cheek burn and either
eyelid fall.
And Geraint look'd and was not
satisfied.

Then forward by a way which,
beaten broad,
Led from the territory of false
Limours
To the waste earldom of another
earl,
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals
call'd the Bull,
Went Enid with her sullen follower
on.
Once she looked back, and when
she saw him ride
More near by many a rood than
yesternorn,
It wellnigh made her cheerful ; till
Geraint
Waving an angry hand as who
should say
'You watch me,' sadden'd all her
heart again.

But while the sun yet beat a dewy
blade,
The sound of many a heavily-
galloping hoof
Smote on her ear, and turning
round she saw
Dust, and the points of lances
bicker in it.
Then not to disobey her lord's
behest,
And yet to give him warning, for
he rode
As if he heard not, moving back
she held
Her finger up, and pointed to the
dust.
At which the warrior in his obsti-
nacy,
Because she kept the letter of his
word,
Was in a manner pleased, and
turning, stood.
And in the moment after, wild
Limours,
Borne on a black horse, like a
thunder-cloud
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the
breaking storm,
Half ridden off with by the thing he
rode,
And all in passion uttering a dry
shriek,
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed
with him, and bore
Down by the length of lance and
arm beyond
The crupper, and so left him
stunn'd or dead.
And overthrew the next that
follow'd him,
And blindly rush'd on all the rout
behind.
But at the flash and motion of the
man
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like
a shoal
Of darting fish, that on a summer
morn
Adown the crystal dykes at Came-
lot
Come slipping o'er their shadows
on the sand,
But if a man who stands upon the
brink

But lift a shining hand against the
 sun,
 There is not left the twinkle of
 a fin
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in
 flower;
 So, scared but at the motion of the
 man,
 Fled all the boon companions of
 the Earl,
 And left him lying in the public
 way;
 So vanish friendships only made
 in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight
 smiled Geraint,
 Who saw the chargers of the two
 that fell
 Start from their fallen lords, and
 wildly fly,
 Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and
 man,' he said,
 'All of one mind and all right-
 honest friends!
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks
 till now
 Was honest—paid with horses and
 with arms;
 I cannot steal or plunder, no nor
 beg:
 And so what say you, shall we
 strip him there
 Your lover? has your palfrey
 heart enough
 To bear his armour? shall we fast,
 or dine?
 No?—then do you, being right
 honest, pray
 That we may meet the horsemen
 of Earl Doorm,
 I too would still be honest.' Thus
 he said:
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-
 reins,
 And answering not one word, she
 led the way.

But as a man to whom a dread-
 ful loss
 Falls in a far land and he knows it
 not,
 But coming back he learns it, and
 the loss

So pains him that he sickens nigh
 to death;
 So fared it with Geraint, who being
 prick'd
 In combat with the follower of
 Limours,
 Bled underneath his armour se-
 cretly,
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle
 wife
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing
 it himself,
 Till his eye darken'd and his
 helmet wagg'd;
 And at a sudden swerving of the
 road,
 Tho' happily down on a bank of
 grass,
 The Prince, without a word, from
 his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of
 his fall,
 Suddenly came, and at his side
 all pale
 Dismounting, loosed the fasten-
 ings of his arms,
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor
 blue eye
 Moistened, till she had lighted on
 his wound,
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk
 Had bared her forehead to the
 blistering sun,
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd
 her dear lord's life.
 Then after all was done that hand
 could do,
 She rested, and her desolation came
 Upon her, and she wept beside
 the way.

And many past, but none
 regarded her,
 For in that realm of lawless
 turbulence,
 A woman weeping for her murder'd
 mate
 Was cared as much for as a sum-
 mer shower:
 One took him for a victim of Earl
 Doorm,
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity
 on him:

Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
 Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;
 Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,
 He drove the dust against her veiless eyes:
 Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
 The long way smoke beneath him in his fear;
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,
 And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,
 While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,
 Came riding with a hundred lances up;
 But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,
 Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he dead?'
 'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all haste.
 'Would some of your kind people take him up,
 And bear him hence out of this cruel sun:
 Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be not dead,
 Why wail you for him thus? you seem a child.
 And be he dead, I count you for a fool;
 Your wailing will not quicken him: dead or not,
 You mar a comely face with idiot tears.
 Yet, since the face is comely—some of you,

Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall:
 An if he live, we will have him of our band;
 And if he die, why earth has earth enough
 To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
 A noble one.'
 He spake, and past away,
 But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
 Each growling like a dog, when his good bone
 Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys
 Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
 To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
 Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians growl'd,
 Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,
 Their chance of booty from the morning's raid;
 Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,
 Such as they brought upon their forays out
 For those that might be wounded; laid him on it
 All in the hollow of his shield, and took
 And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,
 (His gentle charger following him unled)
 And cast him and the bier in which he lay
 Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
 And then departed, hot in haste to join
 Their luckier mates, but growling as before,
 And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,
 And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her.
 They might as well have blest her: she was deaf
 To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by
 her lord,
 There in the naked hall, propping
 his head,
 And chafing his pale hands, and
 calling to him.
 And at the last he waken'd from
 his swoon,
 And found his own dear bride
 propping his head,
 And chafing his faint hands, and
 calling to him;
 And felt the warm tears falling on
 his face;
 And said to his own heart, 'She
 weeps for me':
 And yet lay still, and feign'd
 himself as dead,
 That he might prove her to the
 uttermost,
 And say to his own heart 'She
 weeps for me.'

But in the falling afternoon
 return'd
 The huge Earl Doorm with plunder
 to the hall.
 His lusty spearmen follow'd him
 with noise :
 Each hurling down a heap of things
 that rang
 Against the pavement, cast his
 lance aside,
 And doff'd his helm : and then
 there flutter'd in,
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with
 dilated eyes,
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many
 hues,
 And mingled with the spearmen :
 and Earl Doorm
 Struck with a knife's haft hard
 against the board,
 And call'd for flesh and wine to
 feed his spears.
 And men brought in whole hogs
 and quarter beeves,
 And all the hall was dim with
 steam of flesh :
 And none spake word, but all sat
 down at once,
 And ate with tumult in the naked
 hall,

Feeding like horses when you hear
 them feed ;
 Till Enid shrank far back into
 herself,
 To shun the wild ways of the law-
 less tribe.
 But when Earl Doorm had eaten
 all he would,
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall,
 and found
 A damsel drooping in a corner
 of it.
 Then he remember'd her, and how
 she wept ;
 And out of her there came a power
 upon him ;
 And rising on the sudden he said,
 'Eat !
 I never yet beheld a thing so
 pale.
 God's curse, it makes me mad to
 see you weep.
 Eat ! Look yourself. Good luck
 had your good man,
 For were I dead who is it would
 weep for me ?
 Sweet lady, never since I first
 drew breath
 Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
 And so there lived some colour in
 your cheek,
 There is not one among my gentle-
 women
 Were fit to wear your slipper for
 a glove.
 But listen to me, and by me be
 ruled,
 And I will do the thing I have not
 done,
 For you shall share my earldom
 with me, girl,
 And we will live like two birds in
 one nest,
 And I will fetch you forage from
 all fields,
 For I compel all creatures to my
 will.'

He spoke : the brawny spear-
 man let his cheek
 Bulge with the unswallow'd piece,
 and turning stared ;
 While some, whose souls the old
 serpent long had drawn

Down, as the worm draws in the
wither'd leaf
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at
other's ear
What shall not be recorded—
women they,
Women, or what had been those
gracious things,
But now desired the humbling of
their best,
Yea, would have help'd him to it :
and all at once
They hated her, who took no
thought of them,
But answer'd in low voice, her
meek head yet
Drooping, 'I pray you of your
courtesy,
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly
heard her speak,
But like a mighty patron, satisfied
With what himself had done so
graciously,
Assumed that she had thanked
him, adding, 'Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you
mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How
should I be glad
Henceforth in all the world at
anything,
Until my lord arise and look upon
me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out
upon her talk,
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly
seized on her,
And bare her by main violence to
the board,
And thrust the dish before her,
crying, 'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vex'd, 'I
will not eat,
Till yonder man upon the bier
arise,
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,'
he answer'd, 'Here!'

(And fill'd a horn with wine and
held it to her,)
'Lo ! I, myself, when flush'd with
fight, or hot,
God's curse, with anger—often
I myself,
Before I will have drunken, scarce
can eat :
Drink therefore and the wine will
change your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven,
I will not drink,
Till my dear lord arise and bid me
do it,
And drink with me; and if he rise
no more,
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and
paced his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his
upper lip,
And coming up close to her, said
at last;
'Girl, for I see you scorn my
courtesies,
Take warning: yonder man is
surely dead;
And I compel all creatures to my
will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore
wail for one,
Who put your beauty to this flout
and scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,
Beholding how you butt against
my wish,
That I forbear you thus: cross me
no more.
At least put off to please me this
poor gown,
This silken rag, this beggar-
woman's weed:
I love that beauty should go
beautifully:
For see you not my gentlewomen
here,
How gay, how suited to the house
of one,
Who loves that beauty should go
beautifully!
Rise therefore; robe yourself in
this: obey.'

He spoke, and one among his
gentlewomen
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the
lovely blue
Play'd into green, and thicker
down the front
With jewels than the sward with
drops of dew,
When all night long a cloud clings
to the hill,
And with the dawn ascending lets
the day
Strike where it clung : so thickly
shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be
moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day
of power,
With life-long injuries burning
unavenged,
And now their hour has come ; and
Enid said :

'In this poor gown my dear lord
found me first,
And loved me serving in my
father's hall :
In this poor gown I rode with him
to court,
And there the Queen array'd me
like the sun :
In this poor gown he bade me
clothe myself,
When now we rode upon this fatal
quest
Of honour, where no honour can
be gain'd :
And this poor gown I will not
cast aside
Until himself arise a living
man,
And bid me cast it. I have griefs
enough :
Pray you be gentle, pray you let
me be :
I never loved, can never love but
him :
Yea, God, I pray you of your
gentleness,
He being as he is, to let me
be.'

Then strode the brute Earl up
and down his hall,
And took his russet beard between
his teeth ;
Last, coming up quite close, and
in his mood
Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle
with you ;
Take my salute,' unknighly with
flat hand,
However lightly, smote her on the
cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter help-
lessness,
And since she thought, 'He had
not dared to do it,
Except he surely knew my lord
was dead,'
Sent forth a sudden sharp and
bitter cry,
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
Which sees the trapper coming
thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasp-
ing at his sword,
(It lay beside him in the hollow
shield),
Made but a single bound, and with
a sweep of it
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and
like a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on
the floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he
counted dead.
And all the men and women in the
hall
Rose when they saw the dead
man rise, and fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the
two
Were left alone together, and he
said :

'Enid, I have used you worse
than that dead man ;
Done you more wrong : we both
have undergone
That trouble which has left me
thrice your own :
Henceforward I will rather die
than doubt.

And here I lay this penance on myself,
 Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yestermorn—
 You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,
 I heard you say, that you were no true wife :
 I swear I will not ask your meaning in it :
 I do believe yourself against yourself,
 And will henceforward rather die than doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender word,
 She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :
 She only prayed him, 'Fly, they will return
 And slay you; fly, your charger is without,
 My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you ride
 Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.'
 And moving out they found the stately horse,
 Who now no more a vassal to the thief,
 But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,
 Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd
 With a low whinny toward the pair : and she
 Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,
 Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse
 Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot
 She set her own and climb'd; he turn'd his face
 And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her arms
 About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise
 O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,

Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind
 Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous hour
 Put hand to hand beneath her husband's heart,
 And felt him hers again : she did not weep,
 But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist
 Like that which kept the heart of Eden green
 Before the useful trouble of the rain :
 Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes
 As not to see before them on the path,
 Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,
 A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his lance
 In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.
 Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,
 She, with her mind all full of what had chanced,
 Shriek'd to the stranger, 'Slay not a dead man !'
 'The voice of Enid,' said the knight; but she,
 Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,
 Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd again,
 'O cousin, slay not him who gave you life.'
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake :
 'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;
 I took you for a bandit knight of Doorn;
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,
 Who love you, Prince, with something of the love
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us.
 For once, when I was up so high in pride
 That I was halfway down the slope to Hell,

By overthrowing me you threw
me higher.
Now, made a knight of Arthur's
Table Round,
And since I knew this Earl, when
I myself
Was half a bandit in my lawless
hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our King
to Doorm
(The King is close behind me) bid-
ding him
Disband himself, and scatter all
his powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment
of the King.'

'He hears the judgment of the
King of Kings,'
Cried the wan Prince; 'and lo, the
powers of Doorm
Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to
the field,
Where, huddled here and there on
mound and knoll,
Were men and women staring and
aghast
While some yet fled; and then he
plainlier told
How the huge Earl lay slain within
his hall.
But when the knight besought
him, 'Follow me,
Prince, to the camp, and in the
King's own ear
Speak what has chanced; you
surely have endured
Strange chances here alone;' that
other flush'd,
And hung his head, and halted in
reply,
Fearing the mild face of the
blameless King,
And after madness acted question
ask'd:
Till Edyrn crying, 'If you will
not go
To Arthur, then will Arthur come
to you,'
'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and
they went.
But Enid in their going had two
fears,

One from the bandit scatter'd in
the field,
And one from Edyrn. Every now
and then,
When Edyrn rein'd his charger at
her side,
She shrank a little. In a hollow
land,
From which old fires have broken,
men may fear
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiv-
ing, said:

'Fair and dear cousin, you that
most had cause
To fear me, fear no longer, I am
changed.
Yourself were first the blameless
cause to make
My nature's prideful sparkle in
the blood
Break into furious flame; being
repulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed
and wrought
Until I overturn'd him; then set
up
(With one main purpose ever at
my heart)
My haughty jousts, and took a
paramour;
Did her mock-honour as the fairest
fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride, that I believed
myself
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh
mad:
And, but for my main purpose in
these jousts,
I should have slain your father,
seized yourself.
I lived in hope that sometime you
would come
To these my lists with him whom
best you loved;
And there, poor cousin, with your
meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answer'd
heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample
on him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or
pray'd to me,

I should not less have kill'd him.
 And you came,—
 But once you came,—and with
 your own true eyes
 Beheld the man you loved (I speak
 as one
 Speaks of a service done him)
 overthrow
 My proud self, and my purpose
 three years old,
 And set his foot upon me, and
 give me life.
 There was I broken down; there
 was I saved :
 Tho' thence I rode all-shamed,
 hating the life
 He gave me, meaning to be rid
 of it.
 And all the penance the Queen
 laid upon me
 Was but to rest awhile within her
 court;
 Where first as sullen as a beast
 new-caged,
 And waiting to be treated like
 a wolf,
 Because I knew my deeds were
 known, I found,
 Instead of scornful pity or pure
 scorn,
 Such fine reserve and noble reti-
 cence,
 Manners so kind, yet stately, such
 a grace
 Of tenderest courtesy, that I
 began
 To glance behind me at my former
 life,
 And find that it had been the
 wolf's indeed :
 And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the
 high saint,
 Who, with mild heat of holy
 oratory,
 Subdued me somewhat to that
 gentleness,
 Which, when it weds with man-
 hood, makes a man.
 And you were often there about
 the Queen,
 But saw me not, or mark'd not
 if you saw;
 Nor did I care or dare to speak
 with you,

But kept myself aloof till I was
 changed;
 And fear not, cousin; I am
 changed indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily
 believed,
 Like simple noble natures, credu-
 lous
 Of what they long for, good in
 friend or foe,
 There most in those who most
 have done them ill.
 And when they reach'd the camp
 the King himself
 Advanced to greet them, and
 beholding her
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her
 not a word,
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom
 he held
 In converse for a little, and
 return'd,
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her
 from horse,
 And kiss'd her with all pureness,
 brother-like,
 And show'd an empty tent allotted
 her,
 And glancing for a minute, till he
 saw her
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince,
 and said :

'Prince, when of late you pray'd
 me for my leave
 To move to your own land, and
 there defend
 Your marches, I was prick'd with
 some reproof,
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate
 and be,
 By having look'd too much thro'
 alien eyes,
 And wrought too long with dele-
 gated hands,
 Not used mine own : but now
 behold me come
 To cleanse this common sewer of
 all my realm,
 With Edyrn and with others :
 have you look'd
 At Edyrn? have you seen how
 nobly changed ?

This work of his is great and
 wonderful.
 His very face with change of
 heart is changed.
 The world will not believe a man
 repents :
 And this wise world of ours is
 mainly right.
 Full seldom *does* a man repent,
 or use
 Both grace and will to pick the
 vicious quitch
 Of blood and custom wholly out
 of him,
 And make all clean, and plant
 himself afresh.
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all
 his heart
 As I will weed this land before I
 go.
 I, therefore, made him of our
 Table Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him
 everyway
 One of our noblest, our most
 valorous,
 Sanest and most obedient : and
 indeed
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon
 himself
 After a life of violence, seems to me
 A thousand-fold more great and
 wonderful
 Than if some knight of mine,
 risking his life,
 My subject with my subjects
 under him,
 Should make an onslaught single
 on a realm
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one
 by one,
 And were himself nigh wounded
 to the death.'

So spake the King; low bow'd
 the Prince, and felt
 His work was neither great nor
 wonderful,
 And past to Enid's tent; and
 thither came
 The King's own leech to look into
 his hurt;
 And Enid tended on him there;
 and there

Her constant motion round him,
 and the breath
 Of her sweet tendance hovering
 over him,
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his
 blood
 With deeper and with ever deeper
 love,
 As the south-west that blowing
 Bala lake
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past
 the days.

But while Geraint lay healing
 of his hurt,
 The blameless King went forth
 and cast his eyes
 On whom his father Uther left
 in charge
 Long since, to guard the justice of
 the King :
 He look'd and found them wanting
 and as now
 Men weed the white horse on the
 Berkshire hills
 To keep him bright and clean as
 heretofore,
 He rooted out the slothful officer
 Or guilty, which for bribe had
 wink'd at wrong,
 And in their chairs set up a
 stronger race
 With hearts and hands, and sent
 a thousand men
 To till the wastes, and moving
 everywhere
 Clear'd the dark places and let in
 the law,
 And broke the bandit holds and
 cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole
 again, they past
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
 There the great Queen once more
 embraced her friend,
 And clothed her in apparel like
 the day.
 And tho' Geraint could never take
 again
 That comfort from their converse
 which he took
 Before the Queen's fair name was
 breathed upon,

He rested well content that all
 was well.
 Thence after tarrying for a space
 they rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them
 to the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their
 own land.
 And there he kept the justice of
 the King
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all
 hearts
 Applauded, and the spiteful whis-
 per died :
 And being ever foremost in the
 chase,
 And victor at the tilt and tourna-
 ment,
 They call'd him the great Prince
 and man of men.
 But Enid, whom her ladies loved
 to call
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people
 named
 Enid the Good; and in their halls
 arose
 The cry of children, Enids and
 Geraints
 Of times to be; nor did he doubt
 her more
 But rested in her fealty, till he
 crown'd
 A happy life with a fair death,
 and fell
 Against the heathen of the North-
 ern Sea
 In battle, fighting for the blame-
 less King.

VIVIEN

A storm was coming, but the
 winds were still,
 And in the wild woods of Bro-
 celiande,
 Before an oak, so hollow, huge and
 old
 It look'd a tower of ruin'd mason-
 work,
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien
 lay.

The wily Vivien stole from
 Arthur's court :
 She hated all the knights, and
 heard in thought
 Their lavish comment when her
 name was named.
 For once, when Arthur walking
 all alone,
 Vext at a rumour rife about the
 Queen,
 Had met her, Vivien, being
 greeted fair,
 Would fain have wrought upon
 his cloudy mood
 With reverent eyes mock-loyal,
 shaken voice,
 And flutter'd adoration, and at
 last
 With dark sweet hints of some
 who prized him more
 Than who should prize him most;
 at which the King
 Had gazed upon her blankly and
 gone by :
 But one had watch'd, and had not
 held his peace :
 It made the laughter of an after-
 noon
 That Vivien should attempt the
 blameless King.
 And after that, she set herself to
 gain
 Him, the most famous man of
 all those times,
 Merlin, who knew the range of all
 their arts,
 Had built the King his havens,
 ships, and halls,
 Was also Bard, and knew the
 starry heavens;
 The people called him Wizard;
 whom at first
 She play'd about with slight and
 sprightly talk,
 And vivid smiles, and faintly-
 venom'd points
 Of slander, glancing here and
 grazing there;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,
 the Seer
 Would watch her at her petulance;
 and play,
 Ev'n when they seem'd unlovable,
 and laugh

As those that watch a kitten ; thus
 he grew
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
 and she,
 Perceiving that she was but half
 disdain'd,
 Began to break her sports with
 graver fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often
 when they met
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon
 him
 With such a fixt devotion, that the
 old man,
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery,
 and at times
 Would flatter his own wish in age
 for love,
 And half believe her true : for
 thus at times
 He waver'd ; but that other clung
 to him,
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
 went.
 Then fell upon him a great
 melancholy ;
 And leaving Arthur's court he
 gain'd the beach ;
 There found a little boat, and
 stept into it ;
 And Vivien follow'd, but he
 mark'd her not.
 She took the helm and he the
 sail ; the boat
 Drave with a sudden wind across
 the deeps,
 And touching Breton sands, they
 disembark'd.
 And then she follow'd Merlin all
 the way,
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Bro-
 celiande.
 For Merlin once had told her of a
 charm,
 The which if any wrought on any
 one
 With woven paces and with
 waving arms,
 The man so wrought on ever
 seem'd to lie
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower,
 From which was no escape for
 evermore,

And none could find that man for
 evermore,
 Nor could he see but him who
 wrought the charm
 Coming and going, and he lay as
 dead
 And lost to life and use and name
 and fame.
 And Vivien ever sought to work
 the charm
 Upon the great Enchanter of the
 Time,
 As fancying that her glory would
 be great
 According to his greatness whom
 she quench'd.

There lay she all her length and
 kiss'd his feet,
 As if in deepest reverence and in
 love.
 A twist of gold was round her
 hair ; a robe
 Of samite without price, that
 more exprest
 Than hid her, clung about her
 lissome limbs,
 In colour like the satin-shining
 palm
 On sallows in the windy gleams
 of March :
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,
 'Trample me,
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd
 thro' the world,
 And I will pay you worship ; tread
 me down
 And I will kiss you for it ; ' he was
 mute :
 So dark a forethought roll'd about
 his brain,
 As on a dull day in an Ocean
 cave
 The blind wave feeling round his
 long sea-hall
 In silence : wherefore, when she
 lifted up
 A face of sad appeal, and spake
 and said,
 'O Merlin, do you love me ?'
 and again,
 'O Merlin, do you love me ?'
 and once more,

'Great Master, do you love me?'
 he was mute.
 And lissome Vivien, holding by
 his heel,
 Writhed toward him, slid up
 his knee and sat,
 Behind his ankle twined her
 hollow feet
 Together, curved an arm about
 his neck.
 Clung like a snake; and letting
 her left hand
 Droop from his mighty shoulder,
 as a leaf,
 Made with her right a comb of
 pearl to part
 The lists of such a beard as youth
 gone out
 Had left in ashes: then he spoke
 and said,
 Not looking at her, 'Who are wise
 in love
 Love most, say least,' and Vivien
 answer'd quick,
 'I saw the little elf-god eyeless
 once
 In Arthur's arras hall at Came-
 lot:
 But neither eyes nor tongue—O
 stupid child!
 Yet you are wise who say it; let
 me think
 Silence is wisdom: I am silent
 then,
 And ask no kiss'; then adding all
 at once,
 'And lo, I clothe myself with
 wisdom,' drew
 The vast and shaggy mantle of
 his beard
 Across her neck and bosom to her
 knee,
 And call'd herself a gilded summer
 fly
 Caught in a great old tyrant
 spider's web,
 Who meant to eat her up in that
 wild wood
 Without one word. So Vivien
 call'd herself,
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful
 star
 Veil'd in grey vapour; till he
 sadly smiled:

'To what request for what strange
 boon,' he said,
 'Are these your pretty tricks and
 fooleries,
 O Vivien, the preamble? yet my
 thanks,
 For these have broken up my
 melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 saucily,
 'What, O my Master, have you
 found your voice?
 I bid the stranger welcome.
 Thanks at last!
 But yesterday you never open'd
 lip,
 Except indeed to drink: no cup
 had we:
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd
 the spring
 That gather'd trickling dropwise
 from the cleft,
 And made a pretty cup of both
 my hands
 And offer'd you it kneeling: then
 you drank
 And knew no more, nor gave me
 one poor word;
 O no more thanks than might a
 goat have given
 With no more sign of reverence
 than a beard.
 And when we halted at that other
 well,
 And I was faint to swooning, and
 you lay
 Foot-gilt with all the blossom-
 dust of those
 Deep meadows we had traversed,
 did you know
 That Vivien bathed your feet
 before her own?
 And yet no thanks: and all thro'
 this wild wood
 And all this morning when I
 fondled you:
 Boon, yes, there was a boon, one
 not so strange—
 How had I wrong'd you? surely
 you are wise,
 But such a silence is more wise
 than kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in
hers and said :
'O did you never lie upon the
shore,
And watch the curl'd white of
the coming wave
Glass'd in the slippery sand before
it breaks ?
Ev'n such a wave, but not so
pleasurable,
Dark in the glass of some presage-
ful mood,
Had I for three days seen, ready
to fall.
And then I rose and fled from
Arthur's court
To break the mood. You follow'd
me unask'd ;
And when I look'd, and saw you
following still,
My mind involved yourself the
nearest thing
In that mind-mist : for shall I tell
you truth ?
You seem'd that wave about to
break upon me
And sweep me from my hold upon
the world,
My use and name and fame.
Your pardon, child,
Your pretty sports have brighten'd
all again.
And ask your boon, for boon I owe
you thrice,
Once for wrong done you by
confusion, next
For thanks it seems till now
neglected, last
For these your dainty gambols :
wherefore ask ;
And take this boon so strange
and not so strange.

And Vivien answer'd, smiling
mournfully :
'O not so strange as my long
asking it,
Nor yet so strange as you yourself
are strange,
Nor half so strange as that dark
mood of yours.
I ever fear'd you were not wholly
mine ;

And see, yourself have own'd you
did me wrong.
The people call you prophet :
let it be :
But not of those than can expound
themselves.
Take Vivien for expounder ; she
will call
That three-days-long presageful
gloom of yours
No presage, but the same mis-
trustful mood
That makes you seem less noble
than yourself,
Whenever I have ask'd this very
boon,
Now ask'd again : for see you
not, dear love,
That such a mood as that, which
lately gloom'd
Your fancy when you saw me
following you,
Must make me fear still more you
are not mine,
Must make me yearn still more to
prove you mine,
And make me wish still more to
learn this charm
Of woven paces and of waving
hands,
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach
it me.
The charm so taught will charm
us both to rest.
For, grant me some slight power
upon your fate,
I, feeling that you felt me worthy
trust,
Should rest and let you rest, know-
ing you mine.
And therefore be as great as you
are named,
Not muffled round with selfish
reticence.
How hard you look and how deny-
ingly !
O, if you think this wickedness in
me,
That I should prove it on you un-
aware,
To make you lose your use and
name and fame,
That makes me most indignant ;
then our bond

Had best be loosed for ever : but
 think or not,
 By Heaven that hears I tell you
 the clean truth
 As clean as blood of babes, as
 white as milk :
 O Merlin, may this earth, if
 ever I,
 If these unwitty wandering wits
 of mine,
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a
 dream,
 Have tript on such conjectural
 treachery—
 May this hard earth cleave to the
 Nadir hell
 Down, down, and close again, and
 nip me flat,
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my
 boon,
 Till which I scarce can yield you
 all I am ;
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,
 The great proof of your love : be-
 cause I think,
 However wise, you hardly know
 me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand
 from hers and said,
 'I never was less wise, however
 wise,
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk
 of trust,
 Than when I told you first of such
 a charm.
 Yea, if you talk of trust I tell you
 this,
 Too much I trusted, when I told
 you that,
 And stirr'd this vice in you which
 ruin'd man
 Thro' woman the first hour ; for
 howsoe'er
 In children a great curiousness be
 well,
 Who have to learn themselves and
 all the world,
 In you, that are no child, for still
 I find
 Your face is practised, when I
 spell the lines,
 I call it,—well, I will not call it
 vice :

But since you name yourself the
 summer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the
 gnat,
 That settles, beaten back, and
 beaten back
 Settles, till one could yield for
 weariness :
 But since I will not yield to give
 you power
 Upon my life and use and name
 and fame,
 Why will you never ask some other
 boon ?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you
 too much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-
 hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,
 Made answer, either eyelid wet
 with tears :
 'Nay, master, be not wrathful
 with your maid ;
 Caress her : let her feel herself
 forgiven
 Who feels no heart to ask another
 boon.
 I think you hardly know the ten-
 der rhyme
 Of "trust me not at all or all in all."
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing
 it once,
 And it shall answer for me. Listen
 to it.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if
 Love be ours,
 Faith and unfaith can ne'er be
 equal powers :
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith
 in all.

"It is the little rift within the
 lute,
 That by and by will make the
 music mute,
 And ever widening slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the
 lover's lute,
 Or little pitted speck in garner'd
 fruit,
 That rotting inward slowly moul-
 ders all.

“It is not worth the keeping :
 let it go :
 But shall it? answer, darling,
 answer, no.
 And trust me not at all or all in all.”
 O, master, do you love my tender
 rhyme?’

And Merlin look'd and half
 believed her true,
 So tender was her voice, so fair
 her face,
 So sweetly gleam'd her eyes be-
 hind her tears
 Like sunlight on the plain behind
 a shower :
 And yet he answer'd half indig-
 nantly.

‘Far other was the song that
 once I heard
 By this huge oak, sung nearly
 where we sit :
 For here we met, some ten or
 twelve of us,
 To chase a creature that was
 current then
 In these wild woods, the hart with
 golden horns.
 It was the time when first the
 question rose
 About the founding of a Table
 Round,
 That was to be, for love of God
 and men
 And noble deeds, the flower of
 all the world.
 And each incited each to noble
 deeds.
 And while we waited, one, the
 youngest of us,
 We could not keep him silent, out
 he flash'd,
 And into such a song, such fire
 for fame,
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, com-
 ing down
 To such a stern and iron-clashing
 close,
 That when he stopt we long'd to
 hurl together,
 And should have done it; but the
 beauteous beast

Scared by the noise upstarted at
 our feet,
 And like a silver shadow slipt away
 Thro' the dim land; and all day
 long we rode
 Thro' the dim land against a rush-
 ing wind,
 That glorious roundel echoing in
 our ears,
 And chased the flashes of his
 golden horns
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
 That laughs at iron—as our
 warriors did—
 Where children cast their pins and
 nails, and cry,
 “Laugh, little well,” but touch it
 with a sword,
 It buzzes wildly round the point;
 and there
 We lost him: such a noble song
 was that.
 But, Vivien, when you sang me
 that sweet rhyme,
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed
 charm,
 Were proving it on me, and that
 I lay
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name
 and fame.’

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 mournfully :
 ‘O mine have ebb'd away for
 evermore,
 And all thro' following you to
 this wild wood,
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort
 you.
 Lo now, what hearts have men !
 they never mount
 As high as woman in her selfless
 mood.
 And touching fame, howe'er you
 scorn my song,
 Take one verse more—the lady
 speaks it—this :

“My name, once mine, now
 thine, is closelier mine,
 For fame, could fame be mine,
 that fame were thine,
 And shame, could shame be thine,
 that shame were mine.
 So trust me not at all or all in all.”

'Says she not well? and there
 is more—this rhyme
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of
 the Queen,
 That burst in dancing, and the
 pearls were spilt;
 Some lost, some stolen, some as
 relics kept.
 But nevermore the same two
 sister pearls
 Ran down the silken thread to
 kiss each other
 On her white neck—so is it with
 this rhyme:
 It lives dispersedly in many
 hands,
 And every minstrel sings it differ-
 ently;
 Yet is there one true line, the
 pearl of pearls;
 "Man dreams of Fame while
 woman wakes to love."
 True: Love, tho' Love were of
 the grossest, carves
 A portion from the solid present,
 eats
 And uses, careless of the rest;
 but Fame,
 The Fame that follows death is
 nothing to us;
 And what is Fame in life but half-
 disfame,
 And counterchanged with dark-
 ness? you yourself
 Know well that Envy calls you
 Devil's son,
 And since you seem the Master of
 all Art,
 They fain would make you Master
 of all Vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in
 hers and said,
 'I once was looking for a magic
 weed,
 And found a fair young squire who
 sat alone,
 Had carved himself a knightly
 shield of wood,
 And then was painting on it
 fancied arms,
 Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
 In dexter chief; the scroll "I
 follow fame."
 1

And speaking not, but leaning
 over him,
 I took his brush and blotted out
 the bird,
 And made a Gardener putting in
 a graft,
 With this for motto, "Rather use
 than fame,"
 You should have seen him blush;
 but afterwards
 He made a stalwart knight. O
 Vivien,
 For you, methinks you think you
 love me well;
 For me, I love you somewhat;
 rest: and Love
 Should have some rest and plea-
 sure in himself,
 Not ever be too curious for a
 boon,
 Too prurient for a proof against
 the grain
 Of him you say you love: but
 Fame with men,
 Being but ampler means to serve
 mankind,
 Should have small rest of pleasure
 in herself,
 But work as vassal to the larger
 love,
 That dwarfs the petty love of one
 to one.
 Use gave me Fame at first, and
 Fame again
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there
 my boon!
 What other? for men sought to
 prove me vile,
 Because I wish'd to give them
 greater minds:
 And then did Envy call me Devil's
 son:
 The sick weak beast seeking to
 help herself
 By striking at her better, miss'd,
 and brought
 Her own claw back, and wounded
 her own heart.
 Sweet were the days when I was
 all unknown,
 But when my name was lifted up,
 the storm
 Broke on the mountain and I
 cared not for it.

Right well know I that Fame is
 half-disfame,
 Yet needs must work my work.
 That other fame,
 To one at least, who hath not chil-
 dren, vague,
 The cackle of the unborn about
 the grave,
 I cared not for it : a single misty
 star,
 Which is the second in a line of
 stars
 That seem a sword beneath a belt
 of three,
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
 Of some vast charm concluded in
 that star
 To make fame nothing. Where-
 fore, if I fear,
 Giving you power upon me thro'
 this charm,
 That you might play me falsely,
 having power,
 However well you think you love
 me now
 (As sons of kings loving in pupil-
 lage
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they
 came to power)
 I rather dread the loss of use than
 fame;
 If you—and not so much from
 wickedness,
 As some wild turn of anger, or a
 mood
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may
 be,
 To keep me all to your own self,
 or else
 A sudden spurt of woman's
 jealousy,—
 Should try this charm on whom
 you say you love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as
 in wrath,
 'Have I not sworn? I am not
 trusted. Good!
 Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it
 out;
 And being found take heed of
 Vivien.
 A woman and not trusted, doubt-
 less I

Might feel some sudden turn of
 anger born
 Of your misfaith; and your fine
 epithet
 Is accurate too, for this full love
 of mine
 Without the full heart back may
 merit well
 Your term of overstrain'd. So
 used as I,
 My daily wonder is, I love at
 all.
 And as to woman's jealousy, O
 why not?
 O to what end, except a jealous
 one,
 And one to make me jealous if I
 love,
 Was this fair charm invented by
 yourself?
 I well believe that all about this
 world
 You cage a buxom captive here
 and there,
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower
 From which is no escape for ever-
 more.'

Then the great Master merrily
 answered her :
 'Full many a love in loving youth
 was mine;
 I needed then no charm to keep
 them mine
 But youth and love; and that full
 heart of yours
 Whereof you prattle, may now
 assure you mine;
 So live uncharm'd. For those who
 wrought it first,
 The wrist is parted from the hand
 that waved,
 The feet unmortised from their
 ankle-bones
 Who paced it, ages back : but will
 you hear
 The legend as in guerdon for your
 rhyme?

'There lived a king in the most
 Eastern East,
 Less old than I, yet older, for my
 blood

Hath earnest in it of far springs
to be.
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his
port,
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty
nameless isles;
And passing one, at the high peep
of dawn,
He saw two cities in a thousand
boats
All fighting for a woman on the
sea.
And pushing his black craft a-
mong them all,
He lightly scatter'd theirs and
brought her off,
With loss of half his people arrow-
slain;
A maid so smooth, so white, so
wonderful,
They said a light came from her
when she moved:
And since the pirate would not
yield her up,
The King impaled him for his
piracy;
Then made her Queen: but those
isle-nurtur'd eyes
Waged such unwilling tho' suc-
cessful war
On all the youth, they sicken'd;
councils thinn'd,
And armies waned, for magnet-
like she drew
The rustiest iron of old fighters'
hearts;
And beasts themselves would wor-
ship; camels knelt
Unbidden, and the brutes of
mountain back
That carry kings in castles, bow'd
black knees
Of homage, ringing with their
serpent hands,
To make her smile, her golden
ankle-bells.
What wonder, being jealous, that
he sent
His horns of proclamation out
thro' all
The hundred under-kingdoms that
he sway'd
To find a wizard who might teach
the King

Some charm, which being wrought
upon the Queen
Might keep her all his own: to
such a one
He promised more than ever king
has given,
A league of mountain full of
golden mines,
A province with a hundred miles
of coast,
A palace and a princess, all for
him:
But on all those who tried and
fail'd, the King
Pronounced a dismal sentence,
meaning by it
To keep the list low and pretenders
back,
Or like a king, not to be trifled
with—
Their heads should moulder on
the city gates.
And many tried and fail'd, because
the charm
Of nature in her overbore their
own:
And many a wizard brow bleach'd
on the walls:
And many weeks a troop of carrion
crows
Hung like a cloud above the gate-
way towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon
him, said:
'I sit and gather honey; yet,
methinks,
Your tongue has tript a little:
ask yourself.
The lady never made *unwilling* war
With those fine eyes: she had
her pleasure in it,
And made her good man jealous
with good cause.
And lived there neither dame nor
damsel then
Wroth at a lover's loss? were all
as tame,
I mean, as noble, as their Queen
was fair?
Not one to flirt a venom at her
eyes,
Or pinch a murderous dust into
her drink,

Or make her paler with a poison'd
 rose ?
 Well, those were not our days :
 but did they find
 A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to
 thee ?'

She ceased, and made her lithe
 arm round his neck
 Tighten, and then drew back, and
 let her eyes
 Speak for her, glowing on him,
 like a bride's
 On her new lord, her own, the
 first of men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay,
 not like to me.
 At last they found—his foragers
 for charms—
 A little glassy-headed hairless
 man,
 Who lived alone in a great wild on
 grass ;
 Read but one book, and ever
 reading grew
 So grated down and fled away
 with thought,
 So lean his eyes were monstrous ;
 while the skin
 Clung but to crate and basket,
 ribs and spine.
 And since he kept his mind on one
 sole aim,
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor
 tasted flesh,
 Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him
 the wall
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-
 casting men
 Became a crystal, and he saw them
 thro' it,
 And heard their voices talk behind
 the wall,
 And learnt their elemental secrets,
 powers
 And forces ; often o'er the sun's
 bright eye
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky
 cloud,
 And lash'd it at the base with
 slanting storm ;

Or in the noon of mist and driving
 rain,
 When the lake whiten'd and the
 pinewood roar'd,
 And the cairn'd mountain was a
 shadow, sunn'd
 The world to peace again : here
 was the man.
 And so by force they dragg'd him
 to the King.
 And then he taught the King to
 charm the Queen
 In such-wise, that no man could
 see her more,
 Nor saw she save the King, who
 wrought the charm,
 Coming and going, and she lay
 as dead,
 And lost all use of life : but when
 the King
 Made proffer of the league of
 golden mines,
 The province with a hundred miles
 of coast,
 The palace and the princess, that
 old man
 Went back to his old wild, and
 lived on grass,
 And vanish'd, and his book came
 down to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 saucily ;
 ' You have the book : the charm is
 written in it :
 Good : take my counsel : let me
 know it at once :
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in
 chest,
 With each chest lock'd and pad-
 lock'd thirty-fold,
 And whelm all this beneath as
 vast a mound
 As after furious battle turfs the
 slain
 On some wild down above the
 windy deep,
 I yet should strike upon a sudden
 means
 To dig, pick, open, find and read
 the charm :
 Then, if I tried it, who should
 blame me then ?'

And smiling as a Master smiles
 at one
 That is not of his school, nor any
 school
 But that where blind and naked
 Ignorance
 Delivers brawling judgments, un-
 ashamed,
 On all things all day long; he
 answer'd her.

'You read the book, my pretty
 Vivien!
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
 But every page having an ample
 marge,
 And every marge enclosing in the
 midst
 A square of text that looks a little
 blot,
 The text no larger than the limbs
 of fleas;
 And every square of text an awful
 charm,
 Writ in a language that has long
 gone by.
 So long, that mountains have
 arisen since
 With cities on their flanks—you
 read the book!
 And every margin scribbled, crost,
 and cramm'd
 With comment, densest condensa-
 tion, hard
 To mind and eye; but the long
 sleepless nights
 Of my long life have made it easy
 to me.
 And none can read the text, not
 even I;
 And none can read the comment
 but myself;
 And in the comment did I find the
 charm.
 O, the results are simple; a mere
 child
 Might use it to the harm of any one,
 And never could undo it: ask no
 more:
 For tho' you should not prove it
 upon me,
 But keep that oath you swore, you
 might, perchance

Assay it on some one of the Table
 Round,
 And all because you dream they
 babble of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true
 anger, said:
 'What dare the full-fed liars say of
 me?
They ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs!
 They sit with knife in meat and
 wine in horn.
They bound to holy vows of chas-
 tity!
 Were I not woman, I could tell a
 tale.
 But you are man, you well can
 understand
 The shame that cannot be ex-
 plain'd for shame.
 Not one of all the drove should
 touch me: swine!'

Then answer'd Merlin careless
 of her words,
 'You breathe but accusation vast
 and vague,
 Spleen-born, I think, and proof-
 less. If you know,
 Set up the charge you know, to
 stand or fall!'

And Vivien answer'd frowning
 wrathfully:
 'O aye, what say ye to Sir Valence,
 him
 Whose kinsman left him watcher
 o'er his wife
 And two fair babes, and went to
 distant lands;
 Was one year gone, and on return-
 ing found
 Not two but three: there lay the
 reckling, one
 But one hour old! What said the
 happy sire?
 A seven months' babe had been a
 truer gift.
 Those twelve sweet moons con-
 fused his fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin, 'Nay, I
 know the tale.
 Sir Valence wedded with an out-
 land dame :
 Some cause had kept him sunder'd
 from his wife :
 One child they had : it lived with
 her : she died :
 His kinsman travelling on his own
 affair
 Was charged by Valence to bring
 home the child.
 He brought, not found it there-
 fore : take the truth.'

'O aye,' said Vivien, 'overtrue
 a tale.
 What say ye then to sweet Sir
 Sagramore,
 That ardent man ? "to pluck the
 flower in season ;"
 So says the song. "I trow it is no
 treason."
 O Master, shall we call him over-
 quick
 To crop his own sweet rose before
 the hour ?'

And Merlin answer'd, 'Over-
 quick are you
 To catch a loathly plume fall'n
 from the wing
 Of that foul bird of rapine whose
 whole prey
 Is man's good name : he never
 wrong'd his bride.
 I know the tale. An angry gust
 of wind
 Puff'd out his torch among the
 myriad-room'd
 And many corridor'd complex-
 ities
 Of Arthur's palace : then he found
 a door
 And darkling felt the sculptured
 ornament
 That wreathen round it made it
 seem his own ;
 And wearied out made for the
 couch and slept,
 A stainless man beside a stainless
 maid ;
 And either slept, nor knew of
 other there ;

Till the high dawn piercing the
 royal rose
 In Arthur's casement glimmer'd
 chastely down,
 Blushing upon them blushing, and
 at once
 He rose without a word and parted
 from her :
 But when the thing was blazed
 about the court,
 The brute world howling forced
 them into bonds,
 And as it chanced they are happy,
 being pure.'

'O aye,' said Vivien, 'that were
 likely too.
 What say ye then to fair Sir
 Percivale
 And of the horrid foulness that he
 wrought,
 The saintly youth, the spotless
 lamb of Christ,
 Or some black wether of St.
 Satan's fold.
 What, in the precincts of the
 chapel-yard,
 Among the knightly brasses of the
 graves,
 And by the cold Hic Jacets of the
 dead !'

And Merlin answer'd careless of
 her charge,
 'A sober man is Percivale and
 pure ;
 But once in life was fluster'd with
 new wine,
 Then paced for coolness in the
 chapel-yard ;
 Where one of Satan's shepherd-
 esses caught
 And meant to stamp him with her
 master's mark ;
 And that he sinn'd is not believ-
 able ;
 For, look upon his face !—but if
 he sinn'd,
 The sin that practice burns into
 the blood,
 And not the one dark hour which
 brings remorse,
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold
 we be :

Or else were he, the holy king,
whose hymns
Are chanted in the minster, worse
than all.
But is your spleen froth'd out, or
have ye more ?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning
yet in wrath :
'O aye; what say ye to Sir Lance-
lot, friend ?
Traitor or true ? that commerce
with the Queen,
I ask you, is it clamour'd by the
child,
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do
you know it ?'

To which he answer'd sadly,
'Yea, I know it.
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at
first,
To fetch her, and she took him for
the King ;
So fixt her fancy on him : let him
be.
But have you no one word of loyal
praise
For Arthur, blameless King and
stainless man ?'

She answer'd with a low and
chuckling laugh :
'Him ? is he man at all, who
knows and winks ?
Sees what his fair bride is and does,
and winks ?
By which the good king means to
blind himself,
And blinds himself and all the
Table Round
To all the foulness that they work.
Myself
Could call him (were it not for
womanhood)
The pretty, popular name such
manhood earns,
Could call him the main cause of
all their crime ;
Yea, were he not crown'd king,
coward, and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart,
loathing, said :
'O true and tender ? O my liege
and king !
O selfless man and stainless gentle-
man,
Who wouldst against thine own
eye-witness fain
Have all men true and leal, all
women pure ;
How, in the mouths of base inter-
preters,
From over-fineness not intelligible
To things with every sense as false
and foul
As the poach'd filth that floods the
middle street,
Is thy white blamelessness ac-
counted blame !'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin
overborne
By instance, recommenced, and
let her tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest
names,
Polluting, and imputing her whole
self,
Defaming and defacing, till she left
Not even Lancelot brave, nor
Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than
she will'd.
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes
down, and made
A snowy penthouse, for his hollow
eyes,
And mutter'd in himself, 'Tell *her*
the charm !
So, if she had it, would she rail
on me
To snare the next, and if she have
it not,
So will she rail. What did the
wanton say ?
'"Not mount as high"; we scarce
can sink as low :
For men at most differ as Heaven
and earth,
But women, worst and best, as
Heaven and Hell.

I know the Table Round, my
 friends of old;
 All brave, and many generous,
 and some chaste.
 I think she cloaks the wounds of
 loss with lies;
 I do believe she tempted them and
 fail'd,
 She is so bitter: for fine plots may
 fail,
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as
 well as face
 With colours of the heart that are
 not theirs.
 I will not let her know: nine
 tithes of time's
 Face-flatterers and backbiters are
 the same.
 And they, sweet soul, that most
 impute a crime
 Are pronest to it, and impute
 themselves,
 Wanting the mental range; or
 low desire
 Not to feel lowest makes them
 level all;
 Yea, they would pare the moun-
 tain to the plain,
 To leave an equal baseness; and
 in this
 Are harlots like the crowd, that
 if they find
 Some stain or blemish in a name
 of note,
 Not grieving that their greatest
 are so small,
 Inflate themselves with some
 insane delight,
 And judge all nature from her feet
 of clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes,
 and see
 Her godlike head crown'd with
 spiritual fire,
 And touching other worlds. I
 am weary of her.'

He spoke in words part heard,
 in whispers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat
 and chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat
 of his mood,

And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd
 twice or thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap,
 and stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome
 sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and
 love
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton
 of death!
 White was her cheek; sharp
 breaths of anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand
 half-clench'd
 Went faltering sideways down-
 ward to her belt,
 And feeling; had she found a
 dagger there
 (For in a wink the false love turns
 to hate)
 She would have stabb'd him; but
 she found it not:
 His eye was calm, and suddenly
 she took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten
 child,
 A long, long weeping, not consol-
 able.
 Then her false voice made way
 broken with sobs.

'O crueller than was ever told
 in tale,
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd
 love!
 O cruel, there was nothing wild
 or strange,
 Or seeming shameful, for what
 shame in love,
 So love be true, and not as yours
 is—nothing
 Poor Vivien had not done to win
 his trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd
 her—all her crime,
 All—all—the wish to prove him
 wholly hers.'

She mused a little, and then
 clapt her hands
 Together with a wailing shriek,
 and said:
 'Stabb'd through the heart's
 affections to the heart!

Seeth'd like the kid in its own
 mother's milk !
 Kill'd with a word worse than a
 life of blows !
 I thought that he was gentle,
 being great :
 O God, that I had loved a smaller
 man !
 I should have found in him a
 greater heart.
 O, I, that flattering my true
 passion, saw
 The knights, the court, the king,
 dark in your light,
 Who loved to make men darker
 than they are,
 Because of that high pleasure
 which I had
 To seat you sole upon my
 pedestal
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and
 henceforth
 The course of life that seem'd so
 flowery to me
 With you for guide and master,
 only you,
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway
 broken short,
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left,
 But into some low cave to crawl,
 and there,
 If the wolf spare me, weep my
 life away,
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindli-
 ness.'

She paused, she turn'd away,
 she hung her head,
 The snake of gold slid from her
 hair, the braid
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept
 afresh,
 And the dark wood grew darker
 toward the storm
 In silence, while his anger slowly
 died
 Within him, till he let his wisdom
 go
 For ease of heart, and half be-
 lieved her true :
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow
 oak,
 'Come from the storm,' and having
 no reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and
 the face
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief
 or shame ;
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-
 touching terms
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind,
 in vain.
 At last she let herself be conquer'd
 by him,
 And as the cageling newly flown
 returns,
 The seeming-injured simple-heart-
 ed thing
 Came to her old perch back, and
 settled there.
 There while she sat, half-falling
 from his knees.
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since
 he saw
 The slow tear creep from her
 closed eyelid yet,
 About her, more in kindness than
 in love,
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding
 arm.
 But she dislink'd herself at once
 and rose,
 Her arms upon her breast across,
 and stood
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply
 wrong'd,
 Upright and flush'd before him :
 then she said :

'There must be now no passages
 of love
 Betwixt us twain henceforward
 evermore.
 Since, if I be what I am grossly
 call'd,
 What should be granted which
 your own gross heart
 Would reckon worth the taking ?
 I will go.
 In truth, but one thing now—
 better have died
 Thrice than have ask'd it once—
 could make me stay—
 That proof of trust—so often ask'd
 in vain !
 How justly, after that vile term of
 yours,

I find with grief ! I might believe
 you then,
 Who knows ? once more. O, what
 was once to me
 Mere matter of the fancy, now has
 grown
 The vast necessity of heart and life.
 Farewell ; think kindly of me, for
 I fear
 My fate or fault, omitting gayer
 youth
 For one so old, must be to love you
 still.
 But ere I leave you let me swear
 once more
 That if I schemed against your
 peace in this,
 May yon just heaven, that darkens
 o'er me, send
 One flash, that, missing all things
 else, may make
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I
 lie.'

Scarce had she ceased, when out
 of heaven a bolt
 (For now the storm was close
 above them) struck,
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelin-
 ing
 With darted spikes and splinters
 of the wood
 The dark earth round. He raised
 his eyes and saw
 The tree that shone white-listed
 thro' the gloom.
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had
 heard her oath,
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering
 fork,
 And deafen'd with the stammering
 cracks and claps
 That follow'd, flying back and
 crying out,
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love
 me, save,
 Yet save me !' clung to him and
 hugg'd him close ;
 And call'd him dear protector in
 her fright,
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her
 fright,
 But wrought upon his mood and
 hugg'd him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at
 her touch
 Took gayer colours, like an opal
 warm'd.
 She blamed herself for telling hear-
 say tales :
 She shook from fear, and for her
 fault she wept
 Of petulancy ; she call'd him lord
 and liege,
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star
 of eve,
 Her God, her Merlin, the one pas-
 sionate love
 Of her whole life ; and ever over-
 head
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the
 rotten branch
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-
 rain
 Above them ; and in change of
 glare and gloom
 Her eyes and neck glittering went
 and came ;
 Till now the storm, its burst of
 passion spent,
 Moaning and calling out of other
 lands,
 Had left the ravaged woodland
 yet once more
 To peace ; and what should not
 have been had been,
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and over-
 worn,
 Had yielded, told her all the charm,
 and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put
 forth the charm
 Of woven paces and of waving
 hands,
 And in the hollow oak he lay as
 dead,
 And lost to life and use and name
 and fame.

Then crying 'I have made his
 glory mine,'
 And shrieking out 'O fool !' the
 harlot leapt
 Adown the forest, and the thicket
 closed
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd
 'fool.'

ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the love-
 able,
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
 High in her chamber up a tower
 to the east
 Guarded the sacred shield of
 Lancelot;
 Which first she placed where
 morning's earliest ray
 Might strike it, and awake her
 with the gleam;
 Then fearing rust or soilure
 fashion'd for it
 A case of silk, and braided there-
 upon
 All the devices blazon'd on the
 shield
 In their own tinct, and added,
 of her wit,
 A border fantasy of branch and
 flower,
 And yellow-throated nestling in
 the nest.
 Nor rested thus content, but day
 by day,
 Leaving her household and good
 father, climb'd
 That eastern tower, and entering
 barr'd her door,
 Stript off the case, and read the
 naked shield,
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in
 his arms,
 Now made a pretty history to
 herself
 Of every dint a sword had beaten
 in it,
 And every scratch a lance had
 made upon it,
 Conjecturing when and where :
 this cut is fresh;
 That ten years back; this dealt
 him at Caerlyle;
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot :
 And ah God's mercy, what a
 stroke was there !
 And here a thrust that might have
 kill'd, but God
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd
 his enemy down,
 And saved him : so she lived in
 fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that
 good shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not
 ev'n his name ?
 He left it with her, when he rode
 to tilt
 For the great diamond in the
 diamond jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and
 by that name
 Had named them, since a diamond
 was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew
 from whence he came,
 Long ere the people chose him
 for their king,
 Roving the trackless realms of
 Lyonesse,
 Had found a glen, grey boulder
 and black tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn,
 and clave
 Like its own mists to all the moun-
 tain side :
 For here two brothers, one a king,
 had met
 And fought together; but their
 names were lost.
 And each had slain his brother at
 a blow,
 And down they fell and made the
 glen abhorr'd :
 And there they lay till all their
 bones were bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into colour with the
 crags :
 And he, that once was king, had
 on a crown
 Of diamonds, one in front, and
 four aside.
 And Arthur came, and labouring
 up the pass
 All in a misty moonshine, un-
 awares
 Had trodden that crown'd skele-
 ton, and the skull
 Brake from the nape, and from
 the skull the crown
 Roll'd into light, and turning on
 its rims
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to
 the tarn :

And down the shingly scaur he
plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his
heart
Heard murmurs 'lo, thou likewise
shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he
had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and
show'd them to his knights,
Saying 'these jewels, whereupon
I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's not
the king's—
For public use : henceforward let
there be,
Once every year, a joust for one
of these :
For so by nine years' proof we
needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and our-
selves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till
we drive
The Heathen, who, some say,
shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder.'
Thus he spoke :
And eight years past, eight jousts
had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond
of the year,
With purpose to present them to
the Queen,
When all were won; but meaning
all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never
spoken word.

Now for the central diamond
and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then
his court
Hard on the river nigh the place
which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim
a joust
At Camelot, and when the time
drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to
Guinevere :
'Are you so sick, my Queen, you
cannot move

To these fair jousts ?' 'Yea, lord,'
she said, 'you know it.'
'Then will you miss,' he answer'd,
'the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in
the lists,
A sight you love to look on.' And
the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt
languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood be-
side the King.
He thinking that he read her
meaning there,
'Stay with me, I am sick ; my love
is more
Than 'many diamonds,' yielded,
and a heart,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the
Queen
(However much he yearn'd to
make complete
The tale of diamonds for his des-
tined boon)
Urged him to speak against the
truth, and say,
'Sir King, mine ancient wound is
hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle'; and
the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and
went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she
began.

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
much to blame.
Why go you not to these fair
jousts ? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and
the crowd
Will murmur, lo the shameless
ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful
king is gone !'
Then Lancelot vext at having lied
in vain :
'Are you so wise ? you were not
once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when
you loved me first.
Then of the crowd you took no
more account

Than of the myriad cricket of the
 mead,
 When its own voice clings to each
 blade of grass,
 And every voice is nothing. As to
 knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all
 ease.
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd
 Of all men : many a bard, without
 offence,
 Has link'd our names together in
 his lay,
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery,
 Guinevere,
 The pearl of beauty : and our
 knights at feast
 Have pledged us in this union,
 while the king
 Would listen smiling. How then ?
 is there more ?
 Has Arthur spoken aught ? or
 would yourself,
 Now weary of my service and
 devoir,
 Henceforth be truer to your fault-
 less lord ?

She broke into a little scornful
 laugh.
 'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the
 faultless King,
 That passionate perfection, my
 good lord—
 But who can gaze upon the Sun in
 heaven ?
 He never spake word of reproach
 to me,
 He never had a glimpse of mine
 untruth,
 He cares not for me : only here
 to-day
 There gleam'd a vague suspicion
 in his eyes :
 Some meddling rogue has tam-
 per'd with him—else
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table
 Round,
 And swearing men to vows im-
 possible,
 To make them like himself : but,
 friend, to me
 He is all fault who hath no fault
 at all :

For who loves me must have a
 touch of earth ;
 The low sun makes the colour : I
 am yours,
 Not Arthur's, as you know, save
 by the bond.
 And therefore hear my words : go
 to the jousts :
 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can
 break our dream
 When sweetest ; and the vermin
 voices here
 May buzz so loud—we scorn them,
 but they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the
 chief of knights :
 'And with what face, after my
 pretext made,
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at
 Camelot, I
 Before a king who honours his own
 word,
 As if it were his God's ?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,
 'A moral child without the craft
 to rule,
 Else had he not lost me : but listen
 to me,
 If I must find you wit : we hear it
 said
 That men go down before your
 spear at a touch
 But knowing you are Lancelot ;
 your great name,
 This conquers : hide it therefore ;
 go unknown :
 Win ! by this kiss you will : and
 our true king
 Will then allow your pretext, O
 my knight,
 As all for glory ; for to speak him
 true,
 You know right well, how meek
 soe'er he seem,
 No keener hunter after glory
 breathes.
 He loves it in his knights more
 than himself :
 They prove to him his work : win
 and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly
to horse,
Wroth at himself : not willing to
be known,
He left the barren - beaten
thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd
the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary
downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd
track,
That all in loops and links among
the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill,
the towers.
Thither he made and wound the
gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-
wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and
disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the
wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of
Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre
and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle
court;
And close behind them stept the
lily maid
Elaine, his daughter : mother of
the house
There was not : some light jest
among them rose
With laughter dying down as the
great knight
Approach'd them : then the Lord
of Astolat :
'Whence comest thou, my guest,
and by what name
Livest between the lips ? for by
thy state
And presence I might guess thee
chief of those,
After the king, who eat in Arthur's
halls.
Him have I seen : the rest, his
Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they
are unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the
chief of knights :
'Known am I, and of Arthur's
hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have
brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one
unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask
me not,
Hereafter you shall know me—
and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such
you have,
Blank, or at least with some device
not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat,
'Here is Torre's :
Hurt in his first tilt was my son,
Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is
blank enough.
His you can have.' Then added
plain Sir Torre,
'Yea, since I cannot use it, you
may have it.'
Here laugh'd the father saying
'Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble
knight ?
Allow him : but Lavaine, my
younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will
ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it
in an hour
And set it in this damsel's golden
hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as
before.'

'Nay, father, nay good father,
shame me not
Before this noble knight' said
young Lavaine
'For nothing. Surely I but play'd
on Torre :
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could
not go :
A jest, no more : for, knight, the
maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond
in her hand.'

And that it was too slippery to
 be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool
 or stream,
 The castle-well, belike; and then
 I said
 That if I went and if I fought and
 won it
 (But all was jest and joke among
 ourselves)
 Then must she keep it safelier.
 All was jest.
 But, father, give me leave, an if
 he will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble
 knight:
 Win shall I not, but do my best
 to win:
 Young as I am, yet would I do
 my best.'

'So you will grace me,' answer'd
 Lancelot,
 Smiling a moment, 'with your
 fellowship
 O'er these waste downs whereon
 I lost myself,
 Then were I glad of you as guide
 and friend;
 And you shall win this diamond—
 as I hear,
 It is a fair large diamond,—if you
 may,
 And yield it to this maiden, if you
 will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain
 Sir Torre,
 'Such be for Queens and not for
 simple maids.'
 Then she, who held her eyes upon
 the ground,
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost
 about,
 Flush'd slightly at the slight dis-
 paragement
 Before the stranger knight, who,
 looking at her,
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus
 return'd:
 'If what is fair be but for what is
 fair,
 And only Queens are to be counted
 so,

Rash were my judgment then,
 who deem this maid
 Might wear as fair a jewel as is on
 earth,
 Not violating the bond of like to
 like.'

He spoke and ceased: the lily
 maid Elaine,
 Won by the mellow voice before
 she look'd,
 Lifted her eyes, and read his linea-
 ments.
 The great and guilty love he bare
 the Queen,
 In battle with the love he bare his
 lord,
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd
 it ere his time.
 Another sinning on such heights
 with one,
 The flower of all the west and all
 the world,
 Had been the sleeker for it: but
 in him
 His mood was often like a fiend,
 and rose
 And drove him into wastes and
 solitudes
 For agony, who was yet a living
 soul.
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the
 goodliest man
 That ever among ladies ate in
 hall,
 And noblest, when she lifted up
 her eyes.
 However marr'd, of more than
 twice her years,
 Seam'd with an ancient swordcut
 on the cheek,
 And bruised and bronzed, she
 lifted up her eyes
 And loved him, with that love
 which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the dar-
 ling of the court,
 Loved of the loveliest, into that
 rude hall
 Stept with all grace, and not with
 half disdain
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller
 time,

But kindly man moving among
 his kind :
 Whom they with meats and vin-
 tage of their best
 And talk and minstrel melody en-
 tertain'd.
 And much they ask'd of court and
 Table Round,
 And ever well and readily an-
 swer'd he :
 But Lancelot, when they glanced
 at Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless
 man,
 Heard from the Baron that, ten
 years before,
 The heathen caught and reft him
 of his tongue.
 'He learnt and warn'd me of their
 fierce design
 Against my house, and him they
 caught and maim'd ;
 But I my sons and little daughter
 fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt
 among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's
 hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good
 Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on
 Badon hill.'

'O there, great Lord, doubtless,'
 Lavaine said, rapt
 By all the sweet and sudden pas-
 sion of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, 'you
 have fought.
 O tell us—for we live apart—you
 know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And
 Lancelot spoke
 And answer'd him at full, as hav-
 ing been
 With Arthur in the fight which all
 day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the
 violent Glem ;
 And in the four wild battles by the
 shore
 Of Douglas ; that on Bassa : then
 the war

That thunder'd in and out the
 gloomy skirts
 Of Celidon the forest ; and again
 By castle Gurnion where the
 glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's
 Head,
 Carved of one emerald, center'd in
 a sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he
 breathed ;
 And at Caerleon had he help'd his
 lord,
 When the strong neighings of the
 wild white Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shudder-
 ing ;
 And up in Agned Cathregonion
 too,
 And down the waste and sand-
 shores of Trath Treoit,
 Where many a heathen fell ; 'and
 on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King
 Charge at the head of all his Table
 Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ
 and him,
 And break them ; and I saw him,
 after, stand
 High on a heap of slain, from spur
 to plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathen
 blood,
 And seeing me, with a great voice
 he cried
 "They are broken, they are
 broken !" for the King,
 However mild he seems at home,
 nor cares
 For triumph in our mimic wars,
 the jousts—
 For if his own knight cast him
 down, he laughs
 Saying, his knights are better men
 than he—
 Yet in this heathen war the fire
 of God
 Fills him : I never saw his like :
 there lives
 No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
 Low to her own heart said the lily
 maid,

'Save your great self, fair lord';
 and when he fell
 From talk of war to traits of
 pleasantry—
 Being mirthful he but in a stately
 kind—
 She still took note that when the
 living smile
 Died from his lips, across him
 came a cloud
 Of melancholy severe, from which
 again,
 Whenever in her hovering to and
 fro
 The lily maid had striven to make
 him cheer,
 There brake a sudden-beaming
 tenderness
 Of manners and of nature: and
 she thought
 That all was nature, all, perchance,
 for her.
 And all night long his face before
 her lived,
 As when a painter, poring on a
 face,
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds
 the man
 Behind it, and so paints him that
 his face,
 The shape and colour of a mind
 and life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its
 best
 And fullest; so the face before her
 lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the
 silence, full
 Of noble things, and held her from
 her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in
 the thought
 She needs must bid farewell to
 sweet Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after step,
 she stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesi-
 tating:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry
 in the court,
 'This shield, my friend, where is
 it?' and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from
 out the tower.

There to his proud horse Lancelot
 turn'd, and smooth'd
 The glossy shoulder, humming to
 himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering
 hand, she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd,
 and more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon
 him, saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy
 light.
 He had not dream'd she was so
 beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred
 fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her,
 she stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a
 God's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild
 desire,
 That he should wear her favour
 at the tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in
 asking for it.
 'Fair lord, whose name I know
 not—noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will
 you wear
 My favour at this tourney?'
 'Nay,' said he,
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have
 worn
 Favour of any lady in the
 lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who
 know me, know.'
 'Yea, so,' she answered'd; 'then
 in wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood,
 noble lord,
 That those who know should know
 you.' And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within
 his mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd,
 'True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out
 to me:
 What is it?' and she told him
 'A red sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought
 it: then he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile,
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so much
 For any maiden living,' and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
 But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your Squire.'
 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your colour back;
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed.'
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she stay'd a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
 Her bright hair blown about the serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
 Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,

To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd
 And ever labouring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
 The green light from the meadows underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
 And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
 Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
 And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'
 At last he got his breath and answer'd, 'One,
 One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there—then were I stricken blind
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when
 they reach'd the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his
 eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery
 which half round
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the
 grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced
 King, who sat
 Robed in red samite, easily to be
 known,
 Since to his crown the golden
 dragon clung,
 And down his robe the dragon
 writhed in gold,
 And from the carven-work behind
 him crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down
 to make
 Arms for his chair, while all the
 rest of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds
 innumerable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till
 they found
 The new design wherein they lost
 themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the
 work :
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him
 set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the
 nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young
 Lavaine and said,
 'Me you call great : mine is the
 firmer seat,
 The truer lance : but there is many
 a youth
 Now crescent, who will come to all
 I am
 And overcome it ; and in me there
 dwells
 No greatness, save it be some far-
 off touch
 Of greatness to know well I am not
 great :
 There is the man.' And Lavaine
 gaped upon him
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon
 The trumpets blew ; and then did
 either side,

They that assail'd, and they that
 held the lists,
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, sud-
 denly move,
 Meet in the midst, and there so
 furiously
 Shock, that a man far-off might
 well perceive,
 If any man that day were left
 afield,
 The hard earth shake, and a low
 thunder of arms.
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he
 saw
 Which were the weaker ; then he
 hurl'd into it
 Against the stronger : little need
 to speak
 Of Lancelot in his glory : King,
 duke, earl,
 Count, baron—whom he smote, he
 overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's
 kith and kin,
 Ranged with the Table Round that
 held the lists
 Strong men, and wrathful that a
 stranger knight
 Should do and almost overdo the
 deeds
 Of Lancelot ; and one said to the
 other, 'Lo !
 What is he ? I do not mean the
 force alone,
 The grace and versatility of the
 man—
 Is it not Lancelot ?' 'When has
 Lancelot worn
 Favour of any lady in the
 lists ?
 Not such his wont, as we, that
 know him, know.'
 'How then ? who then ?' a fury
 seized on them,
 A fiery family passion for the
 name
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
 theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and
 prick'd their steeds and
 thus,
 Their plumes driv'n backward by
 the wind they made

In moving, all together down upon him
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,
 Green - glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
 And him that helms it, so they overbore
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;
 He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
 He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
 But thought to do while he might yet endure,
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,
 His party,—tho' it seemed half-miracle
 To those he fought with—drave his kith and kin,
 And all the Table Round that held the lists,
 Back to the barrier; then the heralds blew
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
 Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
 His party, cried 'Advance, and take your prize
 The diamond;' but he answer'd, 'Diamond me
 No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
 There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head.'
 'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,
 'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
 But he, 'I die already with it: draw—
 Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
 And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
 There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, for many a week
 Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove
 Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North and West,
 Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
 'Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'
 'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an one,
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—

Yea, twenty times I thought him
 Lancelot—
 He must not pass uncared for.
 Gawain, rise,
 My nephew, and ride forth and
 find the knight.
 Wounded and wearied needs must
 he be near.
 I charge you that you get at once
 to horse.
 And, knights and kings, there
 breathes not one of you
 Will deem this prize of ours is
 rashly given:
 His prowess was too wondrous.
 We will do him
 No customary honour: since the
 knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the
 prize,
 Ourselves will send it after.
 Wherefore take
 This diamond, and deliver it, and
 return,
 And bring us what he is and how
 he fares,
 And cease not from your quest,
 until you find.'

So saying, from the carven
 flower above,
 To which it made a restless heart,
 he took,
 And gave, the diamond: then
 from where he sat
 At Arthur's right, with smiling
 face arose,
 With smiling face and frowning
 heart, a Prince
 In the mid might and flourish of
 his May,
 Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,
 fair and strong,
 And after Lancelot, Tristram,
 and Geraint
 And Lamorack, a good knight,
 but therewithal
 Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty
 house,
 Nor often loyal to his word, and
 now
 Wroth that the king's command
 to sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not,
 made him leave
 The banquet, and concourse of
 knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse
 and went;
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark
 in mood,
 Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who
 has come
 Despite the wound he spake of,
 all for gain
 Of glory, and has added wound
 to wound,
 And ridd'n away to die?' So
 fear'd the King,
 And, after two days' tarriance
 there, return'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen,
 embracing ask'd,
 'Love, are you yet so sick?'
 'Nay, Lord,' she said.
 'And where is Lancelot?' Then
 the Queen amazed,
 'Was he not with you? won he
 not your prize?'
 'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why
 that like was he.'
 And when the King demanded
 how she knew,
 Said 'Lord, no sooner had you
 parted from us,
 Than Lancelot told me of a
 common talk
 That men went down before his
 spear at a touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot;
 his great name
 Conquer'd; and therefore would
 he hide his name
 From all men, ev'n the King, and
 to this end
 Had made the pretext of a hin-
 dering wound,
 That he might joust unknown of
 all, and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught
 decay'd:
 And added, "our true Arthur,
 when he learns,
 Will well allow my pretext, as for
 gain
 Of purer glory."'

Then replied the King :
 'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had
 it been,
 In lieu of idly dallying with the
 truth,
 To have trusted me as he has
 trusted you.
 Surely his king and most familiar
 friend
 Might well have kept his secret.
 True, indeed, [tical,
 Albeit I know my knights fantas-
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
 Must needs have moved my
 laughter: now remains
 But little cause for laughter: his
 own kin—
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who
 love him, these !
 His kith and kin, not knowing,
 set upon him ;
 So that he went sore wounded
 from the field :
 Yet good news too: for goodly
 hopes are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely
 heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon
 his helm
 A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with
 great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'
 'Yea, lord,' she said,
 'Your hopes are mine,' and saying
 that she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide
 her face,
 Moved to her chamber, and there
 flung herself
 Down on the great King's couch,
 and writhed upon it,
 And clench'd her fingers till they
 bit the palm,
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the
 unhearing wall,
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and
 rose again,
 And moved about her palace,
 proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the
 region round
 Rode with his diamond, wearied
 of the quest,

Touch'd at all points, except the
 poplar grove,
 And came at last, tho' late, to
 Astolat:
 Whom glittering in enamell'd
 arms the maid
 Glanced at, and cried 'What news
 from Camelot, lord ?
 What of the knight with the red
 sleeve ?' 'He won.'
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted
 from the jousts
 Hurt in the side,' whereat she
 caught her breath ;
 Thro' her own side she felt the
 sharp lance go ;
 Thereon she smote her hand:
 wellnigh she swoon'd :
 And, while he gazed wonderingly
 at her, came
 The lord of Astolat out, to whom
 the Prince
 Reported who he was, and on
 what quest
 Sent, that he bore the prize and
 could not find
 The victor, but had ridden wildly
 round
 To seek him, and was wearied of
 the search.
 To whom the lord of Astolat, 'Bide
 with us,
 And ride no longer wildly, noble
 Prince !
 Here was the knight, and here he
 left a shield ;
 This will he send or come for : fur-
 thermore
 Our son is with him ; we shall hear
 anon,
 Needs must we hear.' To this the
 courteous Prince
 Accorded with his wonted cour-
 tesy,
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in
 it,
 And stay'd: and cast his eyes on
 fair Elaine :
 Where could be found face dain-
 tier ? then her shape
 From forehead down to foot per-
 fect—again
 From foot to forehead exquisitely
 turn'd :

'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild
 flower for me!'

And oft they met among the gar-
 den yews,
 And there he set himself to play
 upon her
 With sallying wit, free flashes from
 a height
 Above her, graces of the court, and
 songs,
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden
 eloquence
 And amorous adulation, till the
 maid
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him,
 'Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble
 King,
 Why ask you not to see the shield
 he left,
 Whence you might learn his name?
 Why slight your King,
 And lose the quest he sent you on,
 and prove
 No surer than our falcon yester-
 day,
 Who lost the hern we slipt him at,
 and went
 To all the winds?' 'Nay, by
 mine head,' said he,
 'I lose it, as we lose the lark in
 heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue
 eyes :
 But an you will it let me see the
 shield.'
 And when the shield was brought,
 and Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd
 with gold,
 Ramp in the field, he smote his
 thigh, and mock'd;
 'Right was the King! our Lance-
 lot! that true man!'

'And right was I,' she answer'd
 merrily, 'I,
 Who dream'd my knight the great-
 est knight of all.'
 'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain,
 'that you love
 This greatest knight, your pardon!
 lo, you know it!
 Speak therefore : shall I waste my-
 self in vain?'

Full simple was her answer, 'What
 know I?
 My brethren have been all my
 fellowship,
 And I, when often they have talk'd
 of love,
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for
 they talk'd,
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not;
 so myself—
 I know not if I know what true
 love is,
 But if I know, then, if I love not
 him,
 Methinks there is none other I can
 love.'

'Yea, by God's death,' said he,
 'you love him well,
 But would not, knew you what all
 others know,
 And whom he loves.' 'So be it,'
 cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved
 away :
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay
 a little !
 One golden minute's grace : he
 wore your sleeve :
 Would he break faith with one I
 may not name ?
 Must our true mian change like a
 leaf at last ?
 Nay—like enough : why then, far
 be it from me
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in
 his loves !
 And, damsel, for I deem you know
 full well
 Where your great knight is hidden,
 let me leave
 My quest with you; the diamond
 also : here !
 For if you love, it will be sweet to
 give it;
 And if he love, it will be sweet to
 have it
 From your own hand; and whether
 he love or not,
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare
 you well
 A thousand times!—a thousand
 times farewell !
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold,
 we two

May meet at court hereafter :
 there, I think,
 So you will learn the courtesies of
 the court,
 We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to
 which he gave,
 The diamond, and all wearied of
 the quest
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling
 as he went
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode
 away.

Thence to the court he past;
 there told the King
 What the King knew, 'Sir Lance-
 lot is the knight.'
 And added, 'Sire, my liege, so
 much I learnt;
 But fail'd to find him tho' I rode
 all round
 The region : but I lighted on the
 maid
 Whose sleeve he wore; she loves
 him; and to her,
 Deeming our courtesy is the truest
 law,
 I gave the diamond : she will ren-
 der it;
 For by mine head she knows his
 hiding-place.'

The seldom-frowning King
 frown'd, and replied,
 'Too courteous truly ! you shall go
 no more
 On quest of mine, seeing that you
 forget
 Obedience is the courtesy due to
 kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth
 but all in awe,
 For twenty strokes of the blood,
 without a word,
 Linger'd that other, staring after
 him;
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and
 buzz'd abroad
 About the maid of Astolat, and her
 love.

All ears were prick'd at once, all
 tongues were loosed :

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir
 Lancelot,
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of
 Astolat.'

Some read the King's face, some
 the Queen's, and all
 Had marvel what the maid might
 be, but most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One
 old dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with
 the sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it
 before,

But sorrowing Lancelot should
 have stoop'd so low,

Marr'd her friend's point with pale
 tranquillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the
 court,

Fire in dry stubble a nine days'
 wonder flared :

Till ev'n the knights at banquet
 twice or thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and
 the Queen,

And pledging Lancelot and the
 lily maid

Smiled at each other, while the
 Queen who sat

With lips severely placid felt the
 knot

Climb to her throat, and with her
 feet unseen

Crush'd the wild passion out a-
 gainst the floor

Beneath the banquet, where the
 meats became

As wormwood, and she hated all
 who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever
 kept

The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in
 her heart,

Crept to her father, while he mused
 alone,

Sat on his knee, stroked his grey
 face and said,

'Father, you call me wilful, and
 the fault

Is yours who let me have my will,
 and now,
 Sweet father, will you let me lose
 my wits ?'
 'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Where-
 fore, let me hence,'
 She answer'd, 'and find out our
 dear Lavaine.'
 'You will not lose your wits for
 dear Lavaine :
 Bide,' answer'd he : 'we needs
 must hear anon
 Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,'
 she said,
 'And of that other, for I needs
 must hence
 And find that other, wheresoe'er
 he be,
 And with mine own hand give his
 diamond to him,
 Lest I be found as faithless in the
 quest
 As yon proud Prince who left the
 quest to me.
 Sweet father, I behold him in my
 dreams
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of
 himself,
 Death-pale, for lack of gentle
 maiden's aid.
 The gentler-born the maiden, the
 more bound,
 My father, to be sweet and ser-
 viceable
 To noble knights in sickness, as
 you know,
 When these have worn their
 tokens : let me hence
 I pray you.' Then her father nod-
 ding said,
 'Ay, ay, the diamond : wit you
 well, my child,
 Right fain were I to learn this
 knight were whole,
 Being our greatest : yea, and you
 must give it—
 And sure I think this fruit is hung
 too high
 For any mouth to gape for save a
 Queen's—
 Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get
 you gone,
 Being so very wilful you must
 go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she
 slipt away,
 And while she made her ready for
 her ride,
 Her father's latest word humm'd
 in her ear,
 'Being so very wilful you must go,'
 And changed itself and echoed in
 her heart,
 'Being so very wilful you must die.'
 But she was happy enough and
 shook it off,
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes
 at us ;
 And in her heart she answer'd it
 and said,
 'What matter, so I help him back
 to life ?'
 Then far away with good Sir Torre
 for guide
 Rode o'er the long backs of the
 bushless downs
 To Camelot, and before the city
 gates
 Came on her brother with a happy
 face
 Making a roan horse caper and
 curvet
 For pleasure all about a field of
 flowers :
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,'
 she cried, 'Lavaine,
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot ?'
 He amazed,
 'Torre and Elaine ! why here ?
 Sir Lancelot !
 How know you my lord's name
 is Lancelot ?'
 But when the maid had told him
 all her tale,
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being
 in his moods
 Left them, and under the strange-
 statued gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd
 mystically,
 Past up the still rich city to his
 kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt
 at Camelot ;
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar
 grove
 Led to the caves : there first she
 saw the casque

Of Lancelot on the wall: her
 scarlet sleeve,
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the
 pearls away,
 Stream'd from it still; and in her
 heart she laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from
 his helm,
 But meant once more perchance
 to tourney in it.
 And when they gain'd the cell in
 which he slept,
 His battle-writhen arms and
 mighty hands
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a
 dream
 Of dragging down his enemy made
 them move.
 Then she that saw him lying
 unsleek, unshorn,
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of
 himself,
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous
 cry.
 The sound not wonted in a place
 so still
 Woke the sick knight, and while
 he roll'd his eyes
 Yet blank from sleep, she started
 to him, saying,
 'Your prize the diamond sent you
 by the King:'
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied
 'Is it for me?'
 And when the maid had told him
 all the tale
 Of King and Prince, the diamond
 sent, the quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it,
 she knelt
 Full lowly by the corners of his
 bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open
 hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss
 the child
 That does the task assign'd, he
 kiss'd her face.
 At once she slipt like water to
 the floor.
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride has
 wearied you.
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest
 for me,' she said;

'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I
 am at rest.'
 What might she mean by that?
 his large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness,
 dwelt upon her,
 Till all her heart's sad secret
 blazed itself
 In the heart's colours on her
 simple face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was
 perplexed in mind,
 And being weak in body said no
 more;
 But did not love the colour;
 woman's love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and
 so turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until
 he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided
 thro' the fields,
 And past beneath the wildly-
 sculptured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
 There bode the night: but woke
 with dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to
 the fields,
 Thence to the cave: so day by
 day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to
 and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended
 him,
 And likewise many a night: and
 Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a
 little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly
 whole, at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and
 agony, seem
 Uncourteous, even he: but the
 meek maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being
 to him
 Meeker than any child to a rough
 nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick
 child,
 And never woman yet, since man's
 first fall,

Did kindlier unto man, but her
 deep love
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd
 in all
 The simples and the science of
 that time,
 Told him that her fine care had
 saved his life.
 And the sick man forgot her
 simple blush,
 Would call her friend and sister,
 sweet Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and
 regret
 Her parting step, and held her
 tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except
 the love
 Of man and woman when they
 love their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died
 the death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her
 first
 She might have made this and
 that other world
 Another world for the sick man;
 but now
 The shackles of an old love
 straiten'd him,
 His honour rooted in dishonour
 stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him
 falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-
 sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure
 resolve.
 These, as but born of sickness,
 could not live:
 For when the blood ran lustier in
 him again,
 Full often the sweet image of one
 face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his
 heart,
 Dispersed his resolution like a
 cloud.
 Then if the maiden, while that
 ghostly grace
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he
 answer'd not,

Or short and coldly, and she knew
 right well
 What the rough sickness meant,
 but what this meant
 She knew not, and the sorrow
 dimm'd her sight,
 And drave her ere her time across
 the fields
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd 'Vain, in vain: it
 cannot be.
 He will not love me: how then?
 must I die?'
 Then as a little helpless innocent
 bird,
 That has but one plain passage of
 few notes,
 Will sing the simple passage o'er
 and o'er
 For all an April morning, till the
 ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple
 maid
 Went half the night repeating,
 'Must I die?'
 And now to right she turn'd, and
 now to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in
 rest;
 And 'him or death' she mutter'd,
 'death or him.'
 Again and like a burthen, 'him or
 death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly
 hurt was whole,
 To Astolat returning rode the
 three.
 There morn by morn, arraying her
 sweet self
 In that wherein she deem'd she
 look'd her best,
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for
 she thought
 'If I be loved, these are my festal
 robes,
 If not, the victim's flowers before
 he fall.
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the
 maid
 That she should ask some goodly
 gift of him
 For her own self or hers; 'and do
 not shun

To speak the wish most near to
 your true heart;
 Such service have you done me,
 that I make
 My will of yours, and Prince and
 Lord am I
 In mine own land, and what I will
 I can.'
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her
 face,
 But like a ghost without the power
 to speak.
 And Lancelot saw that she with-
 held her wish,
 And bode among them yet a little
 space
 Till he should learn it; and one
 morn it chanced
 He found her in among the garden
 yews,
 And said, 'Delay no longer, speak
 your wish,
 Seeing I must go to-day:' then
 out she brake;
 'Going? and we shall never see
 you more.
 And I must die for want of one
 bold word.'
 'Speak: that I live to hear,' he
 said, 'is yours.'
 Then suddenly and passionately
 she spoke:
 'I have gone mad. I love you:
 let me die.'
 'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot,
 'what is this?'
 And innocently extending her
 white arms,
 'Your love,' she said, 'your love—
 to be your wife.'
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I
 chos'n to wed,
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet
 Elaine:
 But now there never will be wife of
 mine.'
 'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to
 be wife,
 But to be with you still, to see
 your face,
 To serve you, and to follow you
 thro' the world.'
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the
 world, the world,

All ear and eye, with such a
 stupid heart
 To interpret ear and eye, and such
 a tongue
 To blare its own interpretation—
 nay,
 Full ill then should I quit your
 brother's love,
 And your good father's kindness.'
 And she said,
 'Not to be with you, not to see
 your face—
 Alas for me then, my good days
 are done.'
 'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd,
 'ten times nay!
 This is not love: but love's first
 flash in youth,
 Most common: yea, I know it of
 mine own self:
 And you yourself will smile at
 your own self
 Hereafter, when you yield your
 flower of life
 To one more fitly yours, not
 thrice your age:
 And then will I, for true you are
 and sweet
 Beyond mine old belief in woman-
 hood,
 More specially should your good
 knight be poor,
 Endow you with broad land and
 territory
 Even to the half my realm beyond
 the seas,
 So that would make you happy:
 furthermore,
 Ev'n to the death, as tho' you
 were my blood,
 In all your quarrels will I be your
 knight.
 This will I do, dear damsel, for
 your sake,
 And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke
 She neither blush'd nor shook, but
 deathly-pale
 Stood grasping what was nearest,
 then replied;
 'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,
 And thus they bore her swooning
 to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro'
 those black walls of yew
 Their talk had pierced, her father.
 'Ay, a flash,
 I fear me, that will strike my
 blossom dead.
 Too courteous are you, fair Lord
 Lancelot.
 I pray you, use some rough dis-
 courtesy
 To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,
 'That were against me : what I can
 I will ;'
 And there that day remain'd, and
 toward even
 Sent for his shield : full meekly
 rose the maid,
 Stript off the case, and gave the
 naked shield ;
 Then, when she heard his horse
 upon the stones,
 Unclasping flung the casement
 back, and look'd
 Down on his helm, from which her
 sleeve had gone.
 And Lancelot knew the little
 clinking sound ;
 And she by tact of love was well
 aware
 That Lancelot knew that she was
 looking at him.
 And yet he glanced not up, nor
 waved his hand,
 Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode
 away.
 This was the one discourtesy that
 he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden
 sat :
 His very shield was gone ; only the
 case,
 Her own poor work, her empty
 labour, left.
 But still she heard him, still his
 picture form'd
 And grew between her and the
 pictured wall.
 Then came her father, saying in
 low tones,
 'Have comfort,' whom she greeted
 quietly.

Then came her brethren saying,
 'Peace to thee,
 Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd
 with all calm.
 But when they left her to herself
 again,
 Death, like a friend's voice from a
 distant field
 Approaching thro' the darkness,
 call'd ; the owls
 Wailing had power upon her, and
 she mixt
 Her fancies with the sallow-rifted
 glooms
 Of evening, and the moanings of
 the wind.

And in those days she made a
 little song,
 And call'd her song 'The Song of
 Love and Death,'
 And sang it : sweetly could she
 make and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in
 vain, in vain ;
 And sweet is death who puts an
 end to pain :
 I know not which is sweeter, no,
 not I.

'Love, art thou sweet ? then
 bitter death must be :
 Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is
 death to me.
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me
 die.

'Sweet love, that seems not
 made to fade away,
 Sweet death, that seems to make
 us loveless clay,
 I know not which is sweeter, no,
 not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that
 could be ;
 I needs must follow death, who
 calls for me ;
 Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled
 her voice, and this,
 All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
 That shook her tower, the brothers
 heard, and thought

With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death,'
and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry
and fear
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red
light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling
'Let me die !'

As when we dwell upon a word
we know,
Repeating, till the word we know
so well
Becomes a wonder and we know
not why,
So dwelt the father on her face and
thought
'Is this Elaine?' till back the
maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each,
and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with
her eyes.
At last she said, 'Sweet brothers,
yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among
the woods,
And when you used to take me
with the flood
Up the great river in the boat-
man's boat.
Only you would not pass beyond
the cape
That has the poplar on it: there
you fxit
Your limit, oft returning with the
tide.
And yet I cried because you would
not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining
flood
Until we found the palace of the
king.
And yet you would not; but this
night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the
flood,
And then I said "Now shall I have
my will:"
And there I woke, but still the wish
remain'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at
last
Beyond the poplar and far up the
flood,
Until I find the palace of the
king.
There will I enter in among them
all,
And no man there will dare to
mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will
wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot
muse at me;
Gawain, who bad a thousand fare-
wells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bad
me one:
And there the King will know me
and my love,
And there the Queen herself will
pity me,
And all the gentle court will wel-
come me,
And after my long voyage I shall
rest !'

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my
child, you seem
Light-headed, for what force is
yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore
would you look
On this proud fellow again, who
scorns us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to
heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and
say,
'I never loved him: an I meet
with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike
him down,
Give me good fortune, I will strike
him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done
the house.'

To which the gentler sister made
reply,
'Fret not yourself, dear brother,
nor be wroth,

Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's
 fault
 Not to love me, than it is mine to
 love
 Him of all men who seems to me
 the highest.'

'Highest?' the Father answer'd,
 echoing 'highest?'
 (He meant to break the passion in
 her) 'nay,
 Daughter, I know not what you
 call the highest;
 But this I know, for all the people
 know it,
 He loves the Queen, and in an open
 shame:
 And she returns his love in open
 shame.
 If this be high, what is it to be
 low?'

Then spake the lily maid of
 Astolat:
 'Sweet father, all too faint and
 sick am I
 For anger: these are slanders:
 never yet
 Was noble man but made ignoble
 talk.
 He makes no friend who never
 made a foe.
 But now it is my glory to have
 loved
 One peerless, without stain: so let
 me pass,
 My father, howsoe'er I seem to
 you
 Not all unhappy, having loved
 God's best
 And greatest, tho' my love had no
 return:
 Yet, seeing you desire your child
 to live,
 Thanks, but you work against
 your own desire;
 For if I could believe the things
 you say
 I should but die the sooner; where-
 fore cease,
 Sweet father, and bid call the
 ghostly man
 Hither, and let me shrive me
 clean, and die.'

So when the ghostly man had
 come and gone,
 She with a face, bright as for sin
 forgiven,
 Besought Lavaine to write as she
 devised
 A letter, word for word; and when
 he ask'd
 'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear
 lord?
 Then will I bear it gladly'; she
 replied,
 'For Lancelot and the Queen and
 all the world,
 But I myself must bear it.' Then
 he wrote
 The letter she devised; which
 being writ
 And folded, 'O sweet father,
 tender and true,
 Deny me not,' she said—'you
 never yet
 Denied my fancies—this, however
 strange,
 My latest: lay the letter in my
 hand
 A little ere I die, and close the
 hand
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in
 death.
 And when the heat is gone from
 out my heart,
 Then take the little bed on which I
 died
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it
 like the Queen's
 For richness, and me also like the
 Queen
 In all I have of rich, and lay me
 on it.
 And let there be prepared a
 chariot-hier
 To take me to the river, and a
 barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in
 black.
 I go in state to court, to meet the
 Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for
 mine own self,
 And none of you can speak for
 me so well.
 And therefore let our dumb old
 man alone

Go with me, he can steer and row,
and he
Will guide me to that palace, to
the doors.'

She ceased: her father promised;
whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they
deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than
the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and
on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her
hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and
she died.
So that day there was dole in
Astolat.

But when the next sun brake
from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly
with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-
bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field,
that shone
Full summer, to that stream
whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest
samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of
the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on
deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all
his face.
So those two brethren from the
chariot took
And on the black decks laid her
in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided
blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and
saying to her
'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all
in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor,
and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward
with the flood—

In her right hand the lily, in her
left
The letter—all her bright hair
streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of
gold
Drawn to her waist, and she her-
self in white
All but her face, and that clear-
featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem
as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho'
she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the
palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give
at last
The price of half a realm, his
costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with
bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost
his own,
The nine-years-fought-for dia-
monds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him
to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the
Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a
majesty
She might have seem'd her statue,
but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh
kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong
eye
The shadow of a piece of pointed
lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate
on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer
side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace
toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling
utter'd, 'Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have
my joy,

Take, what I had not won except
 for you,
 These jewels, and make me happy,
 making them
 An armlet for the roundest arm
 on earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the
 swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's :
 these are words :
 Your beauty is your beauty, and
 I sin
 In speaking, yet O grant my
 worship of it
 Words, as we grant grief tears.
 Such sin in words
 Perchance, we both can pardon :
 but, my Queen,
 I hear of rumours flying thro'
 your court.
 Our bond, as not the bond of man
 and wife,
 Should have in it an absoluter trust
 To make up that defect : let
 rumours be :
 When did not rumours fly ?
 these, as I trust
 That you trust me in your own
 nobleness,
 I may not well believe that you
 believe.'

While thus he spoke, half
 turn'd away, the Queen
 Brake from the vast oriel-embow-
 ering vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
 them off,
 Till all the place whereon she
 stood was green ;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold
 passive hand
 Received at once and laid aside
 the gems
 There on a table near her, and
 replied :

'It may be, I am quicker of
 belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot
 of the Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man
 and wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,

It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done
 despite and wrong
 To one whom ever in my heart
 of hearts
 I did acknowledge nobler. What
 are these ?
 Diamonds for me ! they had been
 thrice their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost
 your own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for
 me !
 For her ! for your new fancy.
 Only this
 Grant me, I pray you : have your
 joys apart.
 I doubt not that however changed,
 you keep
 So much of what is graceful : and
 myself
 Would shun to break those bounds
 of courtesy
 In which as Arthur's queen I move
 and rule :
 So cannot speak my mind. An
 end to this !
 A strange one ! yet I take it with
 Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to
 her pearls ;
 Deck her with these ; tell her, she
 shines me down :
 An armlet for an arm to which
 the Queen's
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
 O as much fairer—as a faith once
 fair
 Was richer than these diamonds—
 hers not mine—
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord
 himself,
 Or hers or mine, mine now to
 work my will—
 She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
 And, thro' the casement standing
 wide for heat,
 Flung them, and down they flash'd,
 and smote the stream.
 Then from the smitten surface
 flash'd, as it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they
 past away.
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in
 half disgust
 At love, life, all things, on the
 window ledge,
 Close underneath his eyes, and
 right across
 Where these had fallen, slowly
 past the barge
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
 night.

But the wild Queen, who saw
 not, burst away
 To weep and wail in secret; and
 the barge,
 On to the palace-doorway sliding,
 paused.
 There two stood arm'd, and kept
 the door; to whom,
 All up the marble stair, tier over
 tier,
 Were added mouths that gaped,
 and eyes that ask'd
 'What is it?' but that oarsman's
 haggard face,
 As hard and still as is the face
 that men
 Shape to their fancy's eye from
 broken rocks
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them,
 and they said,
 'He is enchanted, cannot speak—
 and she,
 Look how she sleeps—the Fairy
 Queen, so fair!
 Yea, but how pale! what are
 they? flesh and blood?
 Or come to take the King to
 fairy land?
 For some do hold our Arthur
 cannot die,
 But that he passes into fairy land.'

While thus they babbled of the
 King, the King
 Came girt with knights: then
 turn'd the tongueless man
 From the half-face to the full eye,
 and rose
 And pointed to the damsel, and
 the doors.

So Arthur bad the meek Sir
 Percivale
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift
 the maid;
 And reverently they bore her into
 hall.
 Then came the fine Gawain and
 wonder'd at her,
 And Lancelot later came and
 mused at her,
 And last the Queen herself and
 pitied her,
 But Arthur spied the letter in her
 hand,
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read
 it; this was all.

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot
 of the Lake,
 I, sometime call'd the maid of
 Astolat,
 Come, for you left me taking no
 farewell,
 Hither, to take my last farewell
 of you.
 I loved you, and my love had no
 return,
 And therefore my true love has
 been my death.
 And therefore to our lady Guine-
 vere,
 And to all other ladies, I make
 moan.
 Pray for my soul, and yield me
 burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir
 Lancelot,
 As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read,
 And ever in the reading, lords and
 dames
 Wept, looking often from his face
 who read
 To hers which lay so silent, and
 at times,
 So touch'd were they, half-think-
 ing that her lips,
 Who had devised the letter, moved
 again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot
 to them all:
 'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye
 that hear,

Know that for this most gentle
 maiden's death
 Right heavy am I; for good she
 was and true,
 But loved me with a love beyond
 all love
 In women, whomsoever I have
 known.
 Yet to be loved makes not to love
 again;
 Not at my years, however it hold
 in youth.
 I swear by truth and knighthood
 that I gave
 No cause, not willingly, for such
 a love:
 To this I call my friends in
 testimony,
 Her brethren, and her father, who
 himself
 Besought me to be plain and blunt,
 and use,
 To break her passion, some dis-
 courtesy
 Against my nature: what I could,
 I did.
 I left her and I bid her no farewell.
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel
 would have died,
 I might have put my wits to some
 rough use,
 And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working
 after storm)
 'You might at least have done her
 so much grace,
 Fair lord, as would have help'd
 her from her death.'
 He raised his head, their eyes met
 and hers fell,
 He adding,
 'Queen, she would not be content
 Save that I wedded her, which
 could not be.
 Then might she follow me thro' the
 world, she ask'd;
 It could not be. I told her that
 her love
 Was but the flash of youth, would
 darken down
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
 Toward one more worthy of her—
 then would I,

More specially were he, she wedded,
 poor,
 Estate them with large land and
 territory
 In mine own realm beyond the
 narrow seas,
 To keep them in all joyance:
 more than this
 I could not; this she would not,
 and she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd,
 'O my knight,
 It will be to your worship, as my
 knight,
 And mine, as head of all our Table
 Round,
 To see that she be buried worship-
 fully.'

So toward that shrine which
 then in all the realm
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly
 went
 The marshall'd Order of their
 Table Round,
 And Lancelot sad beyond his
 wont, to see
 The maiden buried, not as one
 unknown,
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous
 obsequies,
 And mass, and rolling music, like
 a Queen.
 And when the knights had laid her
 comely head
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten
 kings,
 Then Arthur spake among them,
 'Let her tomb
 Be costly, and her image there-
 upon,
 And let the shield of Lancelot at
 her feet
 Be carven, and her lily in her
 hand.
 And let the story of her dolorous
 voyage
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on
 her tomb
 In letters gold and azure!' which
 was wrought
 Thereafter; but when now the
 lords and dames

And people, from the high door
streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each,
the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where
he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,
'Lancelot,
Forgive me: mine was jealousy in
love.'
He answer'd with his eyes upon
the ground,
'That is love's curse; pass on, my
Queen, forgiven.'
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy
brows,
Approach'd him, and with full
affection flung
One arm about his neck, and spake
and said.

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in
whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I
know
What thou hast been in battle by
my side,
And many a time have watch'd
thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long
practised knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd
go by
To win his honour and to make
his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee,
a man
Made to be loved; but now I would
to God,
For the wild people say wild
things of thee,
Thou could'st have loved this
maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from
her face,
If one may judge the living by the
dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously
fair,
Who might have brought thee,
now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,
sons

Born to the glory of thy name
and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot
of the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair
she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your
knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to
want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to
want a heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy
love
Could bind him, but free love will
not be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were
freest,' said the King.
'Let love be free; free love is for
the best :
And, after heaven, on our dull side
of death,
What should be best, if not so pure
a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness ?
yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I
think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I
know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing,
but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little
brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and
watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up
his eyes
And saw the barge that brought
her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream,
and said
Low in himself 'Ah simple heart
and sweet,
You loved me, damsel, surely with
a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's.
Pray for thy soul ?

Ay, that will I. Farewell too—
 now at last—
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in
 love?"
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir,
 jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of
 love,
 May not your crescent fear for
 name and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that
 wanes?
 Why did the King dwell on my
 name to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seem-
 ing a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the
 Lake
 Stole from his mother—as the
 story runs—
 She chanted snatches of mysteri-
 ous song
 Heard on the winding waters, eve
 and morn
 She kiss'd me saying "Thou art
 fair, my child,
 As a king's son," and often in her
 arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky
 mere.
 Would she had drown'd me in it,
 where'er it be!
 For what am I? what profits me
 my name
 Of greatest knight? I fought for
 it, and have it:
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose
 it, pain;
 Now grown a part of me: but
 what use in it?
 To make men worse by making
 my sin known?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seem-
 ing great?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight,
 a man
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs
 must break
 These bonds that so defame me:
 not without
 She wills it: would I, if she will'd
 it? nay,
 Who knows? but if I would not,
 then may God,

I pray him, send a sudden Angel
 down
 To seize me by the hair and bear
 me far,
 And fling me deep in that for-
 gotten mere,
 Among the tumbled fragments of
 the hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in re-
 morseful pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy
 man.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of
 prowess done
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Perci-
 vale,
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood
 call'd The Pure,
 Had pass'd into the silent life of
 prayer,
 Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving
 for the cowl
 The helmet in an abbey far
 away
 From Camelot, there, and not long
 after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among
 the rest,
 Ambrosius, loved him much be-
 yond the rest,
 And honour'd him, and wrought
 into his heart
 A way by love that waken'd love
 within,
 To answer that which came: and
 as they sat
 Beneath a world-old yew-tree,
 darkening half
 The cloisters, on a gustful April
 morn
 That puff'd the swaying branches
 into smoke
 Above them, ere the summer when
 he died,
 The monk Ambrosius question'd
 Percivale:

'O brother, I have seen this
 yew-tree smoke,
 Spring after spring, for half a hun-
 dred years :
 For never have I known the world
 without,
 Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale :
 but thee,
 When first thou camest—such a
 courtesy
 Spake thro' the limbs and in the
 voice—I knew
 For one of those who eat in Ar-
 thur's hall ;
 For good ye are and bad, and like
 to coins,
 Some true, some light, but every
 one of you
 Stamp'd with the image of the
 King : and now
 Tell me, what drove thee from the
 Table Round,
 My brother ? was it earthly pas-
 sion crost ?'

'Nay,' said the knight ; 'for
 no such passion mine.
 But the sweet vision of the Holy
 Grail
 Drove me from all vainglories,
 rivalries,
 And earthly heats that spring and
 sparkle out
 Among us in the jousts, while
 women watch
 Who wins, who falls ; and waste
 the spiritual strength
 Within us, better offer'd up to
 Heaven.'

To whom the monk : "The Holy
 Grail !—I trust
 We are green in Heaven's eyes ;
 but here too much
 We moulder—as to things without
 I mean—
 Yet one of your own knights, a
 guest of ours,
 Told us of this in our refectory,
 But spake with such a sadness
 and so low
 We heard not half of what he said.
 What is it ?
 The phantom of a cup that comes
 and goes ?'

'Nay, monk ! what phantom ?'
 answer'd Percivale.
 "The cup, the cup itself, from
 which our Lord
 Drank at the last sad supper with
 His own.
 This, from the blessed land of
 Aromat—
 After the day of darkness, when
 the dead
 Went wandering o'er Moriah—the
 good saint,
 Arimathæan Joseph, journeying
 brought
 To Glastonbury, where the winter
 thorn
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of
 our Lord,
 And there awhile it bode ; and if a
 man
 Could touch or see it, he was
 heal'd at once,
 By faith, of all his ills. But then
 the times
 Grew to such evil that the holy cup
 Was caught away to Heaven, and
 disappear'd."

To whom the monk : 'From
 our old books I know
 That Joseph came of old to
 Glastonbury,
 And there the heathen Prince,
 Arviragus,
 Gave him an isle of marsh whereon
 to build ;
 And there he built with wattles
 from the marsh
 A little lonely church in days of
 yore,
 For so they say, these books of
 ours, but seem
 Mute of this miracle, far as I have
 read.
 But who first saw the holy thing
 to-day ?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale,
 'a nun,
 And one no further off in blood
 from me
 Than sister ; and if ever holy maid
 With knees of adoration wore the
 stone,

A holy maid; tho' never maiden
 glow'd,
 But that was in her earlier maiden-
 hood,
 With such a fervent flame of
 human love,
 Which being rudely blunted,
 glanced and shot
 Only to holy things; to prayer and
 praise
 She gave herself, to fast and alms.
 And yet,
 Nun as she was, the scandal of the
 Court,
 Sin against Arthur and the Table
 Round,
 And the strange sound of an
 adulterous race,
 Across the iron grating of her cell
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted
 all the more.

'And he to whom she told her
 sins, or what
 Her all but utter whiteness held
 for sin,
 A man well-nigh a hundred
 winters old,
 Spake often with her of the Holy
 Grail,
 A legend handed down thro' five
 or six,
 And each of these a hundred
 winters old,
 From our Lord's time. And when
 King Arthur made
 His Table Round, and all men's
 hearts became
 Clean for a season, surely he had
 thought
 That now the Holy Grail would
 come again;
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that
 it would come,
 And heal the world of all their
 wickedness!
 "O Father!" asked the maiden,
 "might it come
 To me by prayer and fasting?"
 "Nay," said he,
 "I know not, for thy heart is pure
 as snow."
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till
 the sun

Shone, and the wind blew, thro'
 her, and I thought
 She might have risen and floated
 when I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak
 with me.
 And when she came to speak,
 behold her eyes
 Beyond my knowing of them,
 beautiful,
 Beyond all knowing of them,
 wonderful,
 Beautiful in the light of holiness.
 And "O my brother, Percivale,"
 she said,
 "Sweet brother, I have seen the
 Holy Grail:
 For, waked at dead of night, I
 heard a sound
 As of a silver horn from o'er the
 hills
 Blown, and I thought, 'It is not
 Arthur's use
 To hunt by moonlight'; and the
 slender sound
 As from distance beyond distance
 grew
 Coming upon me—O never harp
 nor horn,
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or
 touch with hand,
 Was like that music as it came;
 and then
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and
 silver beam,
 And down the long beam stole the
 Holy Grail,
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if
 alive,
 Till all the white walls of my cell
 were dyed
 With rosy colours leaping on the
 wall;
 And then the music faded, and the
 Grail
 Pass'd, and the beam decay'd, and
 from the walls
 The rosy quiverings died into the
 night.
 So now the Holy Thing is here
 again
 Among us, brother, fast, thou, too,
 and pray,

And tell thy brother knights to
fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may
be seen
By thee and those, and all the
world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I
spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and
pray'd
Always, and many among us
many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the
uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that
would be.

'And one there was among us,
ever moved
Among us in white armour,
Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art
beautiful,"
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him
knight; and none,
In so young youth, was ever made
a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad,
when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with
amaze;
His eyes became so like her own,
they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother
more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he;
but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and
some said
Begotten by enchantment—chat-
terers they,
Like birds of passage piping up
and down,
That gape for flies—we know not
whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wander-
ingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet
maiden shore away
Clean from her forehead all that
wealth of hair

Which made a silken mat-work
for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad
and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove
with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange
device,
A crimson grail within a silver
beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight,
and bound it on him,
Saying, "My knight, my love, my
knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is
one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden,
bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what
I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will
crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city": and as
she spake
She sent the deathless passion in
her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers,
and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her
belief.

'Then came a year of miracle:
O brother,
In our great hall there stood a
vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past
away,
And carven with strange figures;
and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a
scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could
read.
And Merlin call'd it "The Siege
perilous,"
Perilous for good and ill; "for
there," he said,
"No man could sit but he should
lose himself":
And once by misadventence
Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost;
but he,

Galahad, when he heard of
Merlin's doom,
Cried, "If I lose myself I save
myself!"

'Then on a summer night it
came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along
the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in
Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we
sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the
roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and
overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was
a cry.
And in the blast there smote along
the hall
A beam of light seven times more
clear than day :
And down the long beam stole
the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous
cloud,
And none might see who bare it,
and it past.
But every knight beheld his
fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights
arose,
And staring each at other like
dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and
sware a vow.

'I swear a vow before them all,
that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail,
would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest
of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad
sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's
cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many
among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder
than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambro-
sius, asking him,
'What said the King? Did Arthur
take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Perci-
vale, 'the King,
Was not in hall: for early that
same day,
'Scaped thro' a cavern from a
bandit hold,
An outraged maiden sprang into
the hall
Crying on help: for all her shining
hair
Was smear'd with earth, and
either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble,
and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope
is torn
In tempest: so the King arose
and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of
those wild bees
That made such honey in his
realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he, too,
saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then
began
To darken under Camelot; whence
the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo
there! the roofs
Of our great hall are rolled in
thunder-smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten
by the bolt."
For dear to Arthur was that hall
of ours,
As having there so oft with all his
knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under
heaven.

'O brother, had you known our
mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur
long ago!
For all the sacred mount of
Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by
roof,

Tower after tower, spire beyond
 spire,
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and
 rushing brook,
 Climbs the mighty hall that
 Merlin built.
 And four great zones of sculpture,
 set betwixt
 With many a mystic symbol, gird
 the hall :
 And in the lowest beasts are
 slaying men,
 And in the second men are slaying
 beasts,
 And on the third are warriors,
 perfect men,
 And on the fourth are men with
 growing wings,
 And over all one statue in the
 mould
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a
 crown,
 And peak'd wings pointed to the
 Northern Star.
 And eastward fronts the statue,
 and the crown
 And both the wings are made of
 gold, and flame
 At sunrise till the people in far
 fields,
 Wasted so often by the heathen
 hordes,
 Behold it, crying, "We have still
 a king."

'And, brother, had you known
 our hall within,
 Broader and higher than any in
 all the lands !
 Where twelve great windows
 blazon Arthur's wars,
 And all the light that falls upon
 the board
 Streams thro' the twelve great
 battles of our King.
 Nay, one there is, and at the
 eastern end,
 Wealthy with wandering lines of
 mount and mere,
 Where Arthur finds the brand,
 Excalibur.
 And also one to the west, and
 counter to it,

And blank : and who shall blazon
 it ? when and how ?—
 O there, perchance, when all our
 wars are done,
 The brand Excalibur will be cast
 away.

'So to this hall full quickly
 rode the King,
 In horror lest the work by Merlin
 wrought,
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden
 vanish, wrapt
 In unremorseful folds of rolling
 fire.
 And in he rode, and up I glanced,
 and saw
 The golden dragon sparkling over
 all :
 And many of those who burnt the
 hold, their arms
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed
 with smoke, and sear'd,
 Follow'd, and in among bright
 faces, ours,
 Full of the vision, prest : and then
 the King
 Spake to me, being nearest,
 "Percivale,"
 (Because the hall was all in
 tumult—some
 Vowing, and some protesting),
 "what is this ?"

'O brother, when I told him
 what had chanced,
 My sister's vision, and the rest,
 his face
 Darken'd, as I have seen it more
 than once,
 When some brave deed seem'd to
 be done in vain,
 Darken; and "Woe is me, my
 knights," he cried,
 "Had I been here, ye had not
 sworn the vow."
 Bold was mine answer, "Had thy-
 self been here,
 My King, thou wouldst have
 sworn." "Yea, yea," said he,
 "Art thou so bold and hast not
 seen the Grail ?"

"Nay, Lord, I heard the sound,
I saw the light,
But since I did not see the Holy
Thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I
saw."

"Then when he asked us,
knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were
as one:

"Nay, Lord, and therefore have
we sworn our vows."

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have
ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to
see?"

"Then Galahad on the sudden,
and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,
call'd,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy
Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a
cry—

"O Galahad, and O Galahad,
follow me."

"Ah! Galahad, Galahad," said
the King, "for such
As thou art is the vision, not for
these.

Thy holy nun and thou have seen
a sign—

Holier is none, my Percivale, than
she—

A sign to main this Order which I
made.

But you, that follow but the
leader's bell"

(Brother, the King was hard upon
his knights)

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of
song,

And one hath sung and all the
dumb will sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath
overborne

Five knights at once, and every
younger knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lance-
lot,

Till overborne by one, he learns—
and ye,

What are ye? Galahads?—no,
nor Percivales"

(For thus it pleased the King to
range me close

After Sir Galahad); "nay," said
he, "but men

With strength and will to right the
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of
violence flat,

Knights that in twelve great
battles splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own
heathen blood—

But one hath seen, and all the
blind will see.

Go, since your vows are sacred,
being made:

Yet—for ye know the cries of all
my realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often,
O my knights,

Your places being vacant at my
side,

This chance of noble deeds will
come and go

Unchallenged, while you follow
wandering fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of
you, yea most,

Return no more: ye think I show
myself

Too dark a prophet: come now,
let us meet

The morrow morn once more in
one full field

Of gracious pastime, that once
more the King,

Before you leave him for this
Quest, may count

The yet-unbroken strength of all
his knights,

Rejoicing in that Order which he
made."

'So when the sun broke next
from underground,

All the great table of our Arthur
closed

And clash'd in such a tourney and
so full,

So many lances broken—never yet

Had Camelot seen the like, since
 Arthur came;
 And I myself and Galahad, for a
 strength
 Was in us from the vision, over-
 threw
 So many knights that all the
 people cried,
 And almost burst the barriers in
 their heat,
 Shouting "Sir Galahad and Sir
 Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake
 from underground—
 O brother, had you known our
 Camelot,
 Built by old kings, age after age,
 so old
 The King himself had fears that it
 would fall,
 So strange, and rich, and dim; for
 where the roofs
 Totter'd toward each other in the
 sky,
 Met foreheads all along the street
 of those
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower,
 and where the long
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd
 the necks
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy
 walls,
 Thicker than drops from thunder,
 showers of flowers
 Fell as we past; and men and boys
 astride
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin,
 swan,
 At all the corners, named us each
 by name,
 Calling "God speed!" but in the
 street below
 The knights and ladies wept, and
 rich and poor
 Wept, and the King himself could
 hardly speak
 For grief, and in the middle street
 the Queen,
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
 shriek'd aloud,
 "This madness has come on us for
 our sins."

And then we reach'd the weirdly-
 sculptured gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were ren-
 der'd mystically,
 And thence departed every one
 his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart,
 and thought
 Of all my late-shown prowess in
 the lists,
 How my strong lance had beaten
 down the knights,
 So many and famous names; and
 never yet
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
 earth so green,
 For all my blood danced in me,
 and I knew
 That I should light upon the Holy
 Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning
 of our King,
 That most of us would follow
 wandering fires,
 Came like a driving gloom across
 my mind.
 Then every evil word I had spoken
 once,
 And every evil thought I had
 thought of old,
 And every evil deed I ever did,
 Awoke and cried, "This Quest is
 not for thee."
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found
 myself
 Alone, and in a land of sand and
 thorns,
 And I was thirsty even unto
 death;
 And I, too, cried, "This Quest is
 not for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I
 thought my thirst
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns,
 and then a brook,
 With one sharp rapid, where the
 crisping white
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping
 wave,
 And took both ear and eye; and
 o'er the brook

Were apple-trees, and apples by
the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will
rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the
Quest";
But even while I drank the brook,
and ate
The goodly apples, all these things
at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
And thirsting, in a land of sand
and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at
a door
Spinning; and fair the house
whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and
innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and
she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as
who should say,
"Rest here"; but when I touched
her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and
the house
Became no better than a broken
shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was
my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across
the world,
And where it smote the plowshare
in the field,
The plowman left his plowing, and
fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her
pail,
The milkmaid left her milking, and
fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but
thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun
had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on
me moved
In golden armour with a crown of
gold [horse
About a casque all jewels; and his

In golden armour jewell'd every-
where:
And on the splendour came,
flashing me blind;
And seem'd to me the Lord of all
the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought
he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo!
he, too,
Opened his arms to embrace me as
he came,
And up I went and touch'd him,
and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand
and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a
mighty hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd: the
spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles
into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a
crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome,
Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest
among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but
found at top
No man, nor any voice. And
thence I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there;
but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding
age.
"Where is that goodly company?"
said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and
he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and
yet gasp'd
"Whence and what art thou?"
and even as he spoke
Fell into dust, and disappear'd,
and I
Was left alone once more, and
cried in grief,
"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into
dust."

'And thence I dropt into a
lowly-vale,
Low as the hill was high, and
where the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel, and
thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and
he said :

"O son, thou hast not true
humility,
The highest virtue, mother of
them all;
For when the Lord of all things
made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal
change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said,
'for all is thine,'
And all her form shone forth with
sudden light
So that the angels were amazed,
and she
Follow'd him down, and like a
flying star
Led on the grey-hair'd wisdom of
the east;
But her thou hast not known : for
what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess
and thy sins ?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save
thyself
As Galahad." When the hermit
made an end,
In silver armour suddenly Galahad
shone
Before us, and against the chapel
door
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we
knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my
burning thirst
And at the sacring of the mass I
saw
The holy elements alone ; but he :
"Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad,
saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the
shrine :
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread,
and went ;

And hither am I come ; and never
yet
Hath what thy sister taught me
first to see,
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my
side, nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me
night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the
night
Blood-red, and sliding down the
blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked
mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping
mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of
this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs every-
where,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and
made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes,
and bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the
strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard
at hand,
And hence I go ; and one will
crown me king
Far in the spiritual city ; and come
thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when
I go."

'While thus he spake, his eye,
dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me,
till I grew
One with him, to believe as he
believed.
Then, when the day began to
wane, we went.

'There rose a hill that none but
man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry
watercourses—
Storm at the top, and when we
gain'd it, storm
Round us and death ; for every
moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd : so
quick and thick

The lightnings here and there to
 left and right
 Struck, till the dry old trunks
 about us, dead,
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years
 of death,
 Sprang into fire : and at the base
 we found
 On either hand, as far as eye could
 see,
 A great black swamp and of an
 evil smell,
 Part black, part whiten'd with the
 bones of men,
 Not to be crost, save that some
 ancient king
 Had built a way, where, link'd
 with many a bridge,
 A thousand piers ran into the
 great Sea.
 And Galahad fled along them
 bridge by bridge,
 And every bridge as quickly as he
 crost
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho'
 I yearn'd
 To follow; and thrice above him
 all the heavens
 Open'd and blazed with thunder
 such as seem'd
 Shoutings of all the sons of God :
 and first
 At once I saw him far on the great
 Sea,
 In silver shining armour starry-
 clear;
 And o'er his head the holy vessel
 hung
 Clothed in white samite or a
 luminous cloud.
 And with exceeding swiftness ran
 the boat
 If boat it were—I saw not whence
 it came.
 And when the heavens open'd and
 blazed again
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver
 star—
 And had he set the sail, or had the
 boat
 Become a living creature clad with
 wings?
 And o'er his head the holy vessel
 hung

Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
 For now I knew the veil had been
 withdrawn.
 Then in a moment when they
 blazed again
 Opening, I saw the least of little
 stars
 Down on the waste, and straight
 beyond the star
 I saw the spiritual city and all her
 spires
 And gateways in a glory like one
 pearl—
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the
 saints—
 Strike from the sea; and from the
 star there shot
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and
 there
 Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy
 Grail,
 Which never eyes on earth again
 shall see.
 Then fell the floods of heaven
 drowning the deep.
 And how my feet recross'd the
 deathful ridge
 No memory in me lives; but that I
 touch'd
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know;
 and thence
 Taking my war-horse from the
 holy man,
 Glad that no phantom vexed me
 more, return'd
 To whence I came, the gate of
 Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,
 —'for in sooth
 These ancient books—and they
 would win thee—teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy
 Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to
 these,
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I
 read,
 Who read but on my breviary
 with ease,
 Till my head swims; and then go
 forth and pass
 Down to the little thorpe that lies
 so close,

And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
 To these old walls—and mingle with our folk;
 And knowing every honest face of theirs,
 As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
 And every homely secret in their hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
 And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-in,
 And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
 That have no meaning half a league away:
 Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
 Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
 Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad
 Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
 No man, no woman?'

Then, Sir Percivale:
 'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
 And women were as phantoms.
 O, my brother,
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
 How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
 For after I had lain so many nights,
 A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,
 In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
 And meagre, and the vision had not come;
 And then I chanced upon a goodly town
 With one great dwelling in the middle of it;
 Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd

By maidens each as fair as any flower:
 But when they led me into hall, behold
 The Princess of that castle was the one,
 Brother, and that one only, who had ever
 Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
 A slender page about her father's hall,
 And she a slender maiden, all my heart
 Went after her with longing: yet we twain
 Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.
 And now I came upon her once again,
 And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
 And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
 And while I tarried, every day she set
 A banquet richer than the day before
 By me; for all her longing and her will
 Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
 I walking to and fro beside a stream
 That flash'd across her orchard underneath
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
 And calling me the greatest of all knights,
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
 And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,
 And the Quest faded in my heart.
 Anon,
 The heads of all her people drew to me,
 With supplication both of knees and tongue:

"We have heard of thee: thou art
our greatest knight,
Our Lady says it, and we well
believe:
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over
us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in
our land."
O me, my brother! but one night
my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose
and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated
mine own self,
And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all
but her;
Then after I was join'd with
Galahad
Cared not for her, nor anything
upon earth.'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men,
when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little
fires.
And this am I, so that ye care forme
Ever so little; yea, and blest be
Heaven
That brought thee here to this
poor house of ours,
Where all the brethren are so hard,
to warm
My cold heart with a friend: but
O the pity
To find thine own first love once
more—to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within
thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then—cast
her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like
a weed.
For we that want the warmth of
double life,
We that are plagued with dreams
of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so
rich,—
Ah! blessed Lord, I speak too
earthlywise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the
cell,
But live like an old badger in his
earth,

With earth about him everywhere,
despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none
beside,
None of your knights?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale:
'One night my pathway swerving
east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our
Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising
moon:
And toward him spurr'd and hail'd
him, and he me,
And each made joy of either; then
he ask'd,
"Where is he? hast thou seen him
—Lancelot?" "Once,"
Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd
across me—mad,
And maddening what he rode:
and when I cried,
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a
quest
So holy?' Lancelot shouted,
'Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I
ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the
way.'
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our
Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once
the talk
And scandal of our table, had
return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so
worship him
That ill to him is ill to them; to
Bors
Beyond the rest: he well had
been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot
might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and,
indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief
and love,
Small heart was his after the Holy
Quest:

If God would send the vision,
well: if not,
The Quest and he were in the
hands of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven: and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
And this high Quest as at a simple thing:
Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's words—
A mocking fire: "what other fire than he,
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him, till by miracle—what else?—
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
Such as no wind could move: and thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then came a night
Still as the day was loud; and thro' the gap

The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone, "And then to me, to me,"
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself—
Across the seven clear stars—O grace to me—
In colour like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now
That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board;
And mighty reverent at our grace was he:
A square-set man and honest; and his eyes,
An out-door sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one:
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?"

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And
 that can I,
 Brother, and truly; since the living
 words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and
 our King
 Pass not from door to door and
 out again,
 But sit within the house. O, when
 we reach'd
 The city, our horses stumbling as
 they trode
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd
 cockatrices,
 And shatter'd talbots, which had
 left the stones
 Raw, that they fell from, brought
 us to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the
 dais-throne,
 And those that had gone out upon
 the Quest,
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe
 of them,
 And those that had not, stood
 before the King,
 Who, when he saw me, rose, and
 bade me hail,
 Saying, "A welfare in thine eye re-
 proves
 Our fear of some disastrous chance
 for thee
 On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding
 ford.
 So fierce a gale made havock here
 of late
 Among the strange devices of our
 kings;
 Yea, shook this newer, stronger
 hall of ours,
 And from the statue Merlin
 moulded for us
 Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
 now—the Quest,
 This vision—hast thou seen the
 Holy Cup,
 That Joseph brought of old to
 Glastonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself
 hast heard,
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt
 resolve

To pass away into the quiet life,
 He answer'd not, but, sharply
 turning, ask'd
 Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this
 Quest for thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not
 for such as I.
 Therefore I communed with a
 saintly man,
 Who made me sure the Quest was
 not for me;
 For I was much aweared of the
 Quest:
 But found a silk pavilion in a
 field,
 And merry maidens in it; and
 then this gale
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-
 pin,
 And blew my merry maidens all
 about
 With all discomfort; yea, and but
 for this,
 My twelvemonth and a day were
 pleasant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd
 to whom at first
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on enter-
 ing, push'd
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
 caught his hand,
 Held it, and there, half-hidden by
 him, stood,
 Until the King espied him, saying
 to him,
 "Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and
 true
 Could see it, thou hast seen the
 Grail"; and Bors,
 "Ask me not, for I may not speak
 of it,
 I saw it": and the tears were in his
 eyes.

'Then there remain'd but
 Lancelot, for the rest
 Spake but of sundry perils in the
 storm;
 Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy
 Writ,
 Our Arthur kept his best until the
 last;

"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd
the King "my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest
avail'd for thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd
Lancelot, with a groan;
"O King!"—and when he paused,
methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his
eyes—
"O King, my friend, if friend of
thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in
their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see
for slime,
Slime of the ditch: but in me
lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that
all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined
and clung
Round that one sin, until the
wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each
as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and
when thy knights
Sware, I sware with them only in
the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy
Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder.
Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept
and said,
That save they could be pluck'd
asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to
whom I vow'd
That I would work according as
he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I
yearn'd and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my
heart,
My madness came upon me as of
old,
And whipt me into waste fields
far away;
There was I beaten down by little
men,

Mean knights, to whom the
moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been
enow
To scare them from me once; and
then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but
coarse grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began
to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and
sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for
the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges
all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the
sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded
heavens
Were shaken with the motion and
the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam
sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd
with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I
said,
'I will embark and I will lose
myself,
And in the great sea wash away
my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into
the boat.
Seven days I drove along the
dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and
all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the
seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the
surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and
looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of
Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to
the sea,
And steps that met the breaker!
there was none
Stood near it but a lion on each
side

That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
 There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
 Those two great beasts rose up-right like a man,
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between;
 And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
 'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
 Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence
 The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.
 And up into the sounding hall I past;
 But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
 No bench nor table, painting on the wall
 Or shield of knight; only the rounded moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the top-most tower
 To the eastward: up I climb'd a thousand steps
 With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to climb
 For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
 'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'
 Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
 It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
 As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,

With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes.
 And but for all my madness and my sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
 That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
 And cover'd; and this Quest was not for me."

"So speaking, and here ceasing,
 Lancelot left
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—
 nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,
 "Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
 But as for thine, my good friend, Percivale,
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noon-day owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things

Hope not to make thyself by idle
vows,
Being too blind to have desire to
see.
But if indeed there came a sign
from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and
Percivale,
For these have seen according to
their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old
times,
And all the sacred madness of the
bard,
When God made music thro' them,
could but speak
His music by the framework and
the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken
truth.

“Nay—but thou errest, Lance-
lot: never yet
Could all of true and noble in
knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it
might be,
With such a closeness, but apart
there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou
spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure
nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear
its flower.

“And spake I not too truly, O
my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I
said
To those who went upon the Holy
Quest,
That most of them would follow
wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to
me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren
board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd
a tithe—
And out of those to whom the
vision came

My greatest hardly will believe he
saw;
Another hath beheld it afar
off,
And leaving human wrongs to
right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent
life.
And one hath had the vision face
to face,
And now his chair desires him here
in vain,
However they may crown him
otherwise.

“And some among you held,
that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have
sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King
must guard
That which he rules, and is but as
the hind
To whom a space of land is given
to plough,
Who may not wander from the
allotted field,
Before his work be done; but,
being done,
Let visions of the night or of the
day
Come, as they will; and many a
time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems
not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball
is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is
not air
But vision—yea, his very hand
and foot—
In moments when he feels he
cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to
himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor
that One
Who rose again: ye have seen
what ye have seen.”

‘So spake the King: I knew not
all he meant.’

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights
to fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest; and as he
sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high
doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro'
these a youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of
the fields
Past, and the sunshine came along
with him.

'Make me thy knight, because
I know, Sir King,
All that belong to knighthood,
and I love,'
Such was his cry; for having heard
the King
Had let proclaim a tournament—
the prize
A golden circlet and a knightly
sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady
won
The golden circlet, for himself the
sword:
And there were those who knew
him near the King
And promised for him: and
Arthur made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas
of the isles—
But lately come to his inherit-
ance,
And lord of many a barren isle was
he—
Riding at noon, a day or twain
before,
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
find
Caerleon and the King, had felt
the sun
Beat like a strong knight on his
helm, and reel'd
Almost to falling from his horse;
but saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping
side,
Whereon a hundred stately beeches
grew,

And here and there great hollies
under them.
But for a mile all round was open
space,
And fern and heath: and slowly
Pelleas drew
To that dim day, then binding his
good horse
To a tree, cast himself down; and
as he lay
At random looking over the brown
earth
Thro' that green-glooming twilight
of the grove,
It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
without
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
So that his eyes were dazzled
looking at it.
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
cloud
Floating, and once the shadow of a
bird
Flying, and then a fawn; and his
eyes closed.
And since he loved all maidens,
but no maid
In special, half-awake he whis-
per'd, 'Where?
O where? I love thee, tho' I know
thee not.
For fair thou art and pure as
Guinevere,
And I will make thee with my
spear and sword
As famous—O my queen, my
Guinevere,
For I will be thine Arthur when
we meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound
of talk
And laughter at the limit of the
wood,
And glancing thro' the hoary boles,
he saw,
Strange as to some old prophet
might have seem'd
A vision hovering on a sea of
fire,
Damsels in divers colours like the
cloud
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of
them

On horses, and the horses richly
trapt
Breast-high in that bright line of
bracken stood :
And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
And one was pointing this way,
and one that,
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
And loosed his horse, and led him
to the light.
There she that seem'd the chief
among them said,
'In happy time behold our pilot-
star !
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and
we ride,
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
knights
There at Caerleon, but have lost
our way :
To right ? to left ? straightfor-
ward ? back again ?
Which ? tell us quickly.'

And Pelleas gazing thought,
'Is Guinevere herself so beau-
tiful ?'
For large her violet eyes look'd,
and her bloom
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless
heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in
womanhood,
And slender was her hand and
small her shape,
And but for those large eyes, the
haunts of scorn,
She might have seem'd a toy to
trifle with,
And pass and care no more. But
while he gazed
The beauty of her flesh abash'd
the boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her
soul :
For as the base man, judging of
the good,
Puts his own baseness in him by
default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas
lend

All the young beauty of his own
soul to hers,
Believing her ; and when she spake
to him,
Stammer'd, and could not make
her a reply.
For out of the waste islands had
he come,
Where saving his own sisters he
had known
Scarce any but the women of his
isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and
scream'd against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from
the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd
the lady round
And look'd upon her people ; and
as when
A stone is flung into some sleeping
tarn,
The circle widens till it lip the
marge,
Spread the slow smile thro' all her
company.
Three knights were there among ;
and they too smiled,
Scorning him ; for the lady was
Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her
land.

Again she said, 'O wild and of
the woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of
our speech ?
Or have the Heavens but given
thee a fair face,
Lacking a tongue ?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,
'I woke from dreams ; and coming
out of gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light,
and crave
Pardon : but will ye to Caer-
leon ? I
Go likewise : shall I lead you to
the King ?'

--'Lead then,' she said; and thro'
 the woods they went.
 And while they rode, the meaning
 in his eyes,
 His tenderness of manner, and
 chaste awe,
 His broken utterances and bash-
 fulness,
 Were all a burthen to her, and in
 her heart
 She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on
 a fool,
 Raw, yet so stale!' But since
 her mind was bent
 On hearing, after trumpet blown,
 her name
 And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in
 the lists
 Cried—and beholding him so
 strong, she thought
 That peradventure he will fight
 for me,
 And win the circlet: therefore
 flatter'd him,
 Being so gracious, that he well-
 nigh deem'd
 His wish by hers was echo'd; and
 her knights
 And all her damsels, too, were
 gracious to him,
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,
 she,
 Taking his hand, 'O the strong
 hand,' she said,
 'See! look at mine! but wilt thou
 fight for me,
 And win me this fine circlet, Pel-
 leas,
 That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart
 Leapt, and he cried 'Ay! wilt
 thou if I win?'
 'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd,
 and she laugh'd,
 And straightly nipt the hand, and
 flung it from her;
 Then glanced askew at those three
 knights of hers,
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along
 with her.

'O happy world,' thought Pel-
 leas, 'all, meseems,
 Are happy; I the happiest of them
 all.'
 Nor slept that night for pleasure
 in his blood,
 And green wood-ways, and eyes
 among the leaves;
 Then being on the morrow knight-
 ed, sware
 To love one only. And as he came
 away,
 The men who met him rounded on
 their heels
 And wonder'd after him, because
 his face
 Shone like the countenance of a
 priest of old
 Against the flame about a sac-
 rifice
 Kindled by fire from heaven: so
 glad was he.

Then Arthur made vast ban-
 quets and strange knights
 From the four winds came in: and
 each one sat,
 Tho' served with choice from air,
 land, stream, and sea,
 Oft in mid-banquet measuring
 with his eyes
 His neighbour's make and might:
 and Pelleas look'd
 Noble among the noble, for he
 dream'd
 His lady loved him, and he knew
 himself
 Loved of the King: and him his
 new-made knight
 Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
 moved him more
 Than all the ranged reasons of the
 world.

Then blush'd and brake the
 morning of the jousts,
 And this was call'd 'The Tourna-
 ment of Youth':
 For Arthur, loving his young
 knight, withheld
 His older and his mightier from
 the lists,
 That Pelleas might obtain his
 lady's love,

According to her promise, and remain
 Lord of the tourney. And Arthur
 had the jousts
 Down in the flat field by the shore
 of Usk
 Holden : the gilded parapets were
 crown'd
 With faces, and the great tower
 fill'd with eyes
 Up to the summit, and the trum-
 pets blew.
 There all day long Sir Pelleas
 kept the field
 With honour : so by that strong
 hand of his
 The sword and golden circlet were
 achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady
 loved : the heat
 Of pride and glory fired her face ;
 her eye
 Sparkled ; she caught the circlet
 from his lance,
 And there before the people
 crown'd herself :
 So for the last time she was gra-
 cious to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—
 her look
 Bright for all others, cloudier on
 her knight—
 Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pel-
 leas droop,
 Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at
 thee much,
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
 To him who won thee glory !'
 And she said,
 'Had ye not held your Lancelot
 in your bower,
 My Queen, he had not won.'
 Whereat the Queen,
 As one whose foot is bitten by an
 ant,
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd
 and went her way.

But after, when her damsels,
 and herself,
 And those three knights all set
 their faces home,

Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
 him cried,
 'Damsels—and yet I should be
 shamed to say it—
 I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him
 back
 Among yourselves. Would rather
 that we had
 Some rough old knight who knew
 the worldly way,
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to
 ride
 And jest with : take him to you,
 keep him off,
 And pamper him with papmeat, if
 ye will,
 Old milky fables of the wolf and
 sheep,
 Such as the wholesome mothers
 tell their boys.
 Nay, should ye try him with a
 merry one
 To find his mettle, good : and if he
 fly us,
 Small matter ! let him.' This her
 damsels heard,
 And mindful of her small and cruel
 hand,
 They, closing round him thro' the
 journey home,
 Acted her hest, and always from
 her side
 Restrain'd him with all manner of
 device,
 So that he could not come to
 speech with her.
 And when she gain'd her castle,
 upsprang the bridge,
 Down rang the grate of iron thro'
 the groove,
 And he was left alone in open
 field.

'These be the ways of ladies,'
 Pelleas thought,
 'To those who love them, trials of
 our faith.
 Yea, let her prove me to the utter-
 most,
 For loyal to the uttermost am I.'
 So made his moan ; and, darkness
 falling, sought
 A priory not far off, there lodged,
 but rose

With morning every day, and,
moist or dry,
Full-arm'd upon his charger all
day long
Sat by the walls, and no one
open'd to him.

And this persistence turn'd her
scorn to wrath.
Then calling her three knights, she
charged them, 'Out!
And drive him from the walls.'
And out they came,
But Pelleas overthrew them as
they dash'd
Against him one by one; and these
return'd,
But still he kept his watch beneath
the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a
hate; and once,
A week beyond, while walking on
the walls
With her three knights, she
pointed downward, 'Look,
He haunts me—I cannot breathe
—besieges me;
Down! strike him! put my hate
into your strokes,
And drive him from my walls.'
And down they went,
And Pelleas overthrew them one
by one;
And from the tower above him
cried Ettarre,
'Bind him, and bring him in.'

He heard her voice;
Then let the strong hand, which
had overthrown
Her minion-knights, by those he
overthrew
Be bounden straight, and so they
brought him in.

Then when he came before
Ettarre, the sight
Of her rich beauty made him at
one glance
More bondsman in his heart than
in his bonds.
Yet with good cheer he spake,
'Behold me, Lady,

A prisoner, and the vassal of thy
will;
And if thou keep me in thy donjon
here,
Content am I so that I see thy
face
But once a day: for I have sworn
my vows,
And thou hast given thy promise,
and I know
That all these pains are trials of
my faith,
And that thyself when thou hast
seen me strain'd
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at
length
Yield me thy love and know me
for thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so
bitterly,
With all her damsels, he was
stricken mute;
But when she mock'd his vows and
the great King,
Lighted on words: 'For pity of
thine own self,
Peace, Lady, peace: is he not
thine and mine?'
'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never
heard his voice
But long'd to break away. Unbind
him now,
And thrust him out of doors; for
save he be
Fool to the midmost marrow of
his bones,
He will return no more.' And
those, her three,
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust
him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond,
again
She call'd them, saying, 'There he
watches yet,
There like a dog before his master's
door!
Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate
him, ye?
Ye know yourselves: how can ye
bide at peace,
Affronted with his fulsome inno-
cence?

Are ye but creatures of the board
and bed,
No men to strike ? Fall on him all
at once,
And if ye slay him I reckon not : if
ye fail,
Give ye the slave mine order to be
bound,
Bind him as heretofore, and bring
him in :
It may be ye shall slay him in his
bonds.'

She spake ; and at her will they
couch'd their spears,
Three against one : and Gawain
passing by,
Bound upon solitary adventure,
saw
Low down beneath the shadow of
those towers
A villainy, three to one : and
thro' his heart
The fire of honour and all noble
deeds
Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike
upon thy side—
The caitiffs !' 'Nay,' said
Pelleas, 'but forbear ;
He needs no aid who doth his
lady's will.'

So Gawain, looking at the
villainy done,
Forbore, but in his heat and
eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the
dog, withheld
A moment from the vermin that
he sees
Before him, shivers, ere he springs,
and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them,
one to three ;
And they rose up, and bound, and
brought him in.
Then first her anger, leaving
Pelleas, burn'd
Full on her knights in many an
evil name
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-
beaten hound :

'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are
fit to touch,
Far less to bind, your victor, and
thrust him out,
And let who will release him from
his bonds.
And if he comes again'—there
she brake short ;
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for
indeed
I loved you and I deem'd you
beautiful,
I cannot brook to see your beauty
marr'd
Thro' evil spite : and if ye love
me not,
I cannot bear to dream you so
forsworn :
I had liefer ye were worthy of my
love,
Than to be loved again of you—
farewell ;
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet
my love,
Vex not yourself : ye will not see
me more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed
upon the man
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,
and thought,
'Why have I push'd him from
me ? this man loves,
If love there be : yet him I loved
not. Why ?
I deem'd him fool ? yea, so ? or
that in him
A something—was it nobler than
myself ?—
Seem'd my reproach ? He is not
of my kind.
He could not love me, did he know
me well.
Nay, let him go—and quickly.'
And her knights
Laugh'd not, but thrust him
bounden out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
him from his bonds,
And flung them o'er the walls ; and
afterward,
Shaking his hands, as from a
lazar's rag,

'Faith of my body,' he said,
 'and art thou not—
 Yea thou art he, whom late our
 Arthur made
 Knight of his table; yea and he
 that won
 The circlet? wherefore hast thou
 so defamed
 Thy brotherhood in me and all the
 rest,
 As let these caitiffs on thee work
 their will?"

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their
 wills are hers
 For whom I won the circlet; and
 mine, hers,
 Thus to be bounden, so to see her
 face,
 Marr'd tho' it be with spite and
 mockery now,
 Other than when I found her in
 the woods;
 And tho' she hath me bounden but
 in spite,
 And all to flout me, when they
 bring me in,
 Let me be bounden, I shall see her
 face;
 Else must I die thro' mine un-
 happiness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly
 tho' in scorn,
 'Why, let my lady bind me if she
 will,
 And let my lady beat me if she
 will:
 But an she send her delegate to
 thrall
 These fighting hands of mine—
 Christ kill me then
 But I will slice him handless by the
 wrist,
 And let my lady sear the stump for
 him,
 Howl as he may. But hold me for
 your friend:
 Come, ye know nothing: here I
 pledge my troth,
 Yea, by the honour of the Table
 Round,

I will be leal to thee and work thy
 work,
 And tame thy jailing princess to
 thine hand.
 Lend me thine horse and arms,
 and I will say
 That I have slain thee. She will
 let me in
 To hear the manner of thy fight
 and fall;
 Then, when I come within her
 counsels, then
 From prime to vespers will I chant
 thy praise
 As prowtest knight and truest
 lover, more
 Than any have sung thee living,
 till she long
 To have thee back in lusty life
 again,
 Not to be bound, save by white
 bonds and warm,
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore
 now thy horse
 And armour: let me go: be
 comforted:
 Give me three days to melt her
 fancy, and hope
 The third night hence will bring
 thee news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and
 all his arms,
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
 and took
 Gawain's, and said 'Betray me
 not, but help—
 Art thou not he whom men call
 light-of-love?"

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women
 be so light.'
 Then bounded forward to the
 castle walls,
 And raised a bugle hanging from
 his neck,
 And winded it, and that so musi-
 cally
 That all the old echoes hidden in
 the wall
 Rang out like hollow woods at
 huntingtide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower;
 'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee not.'
 But Gawain lifting up his visor said,
 'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye hate:
 Behold his horse and armour. Open gate,
 And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,
 Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo!
 Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that hath
 His horse and armour: will ye let him in?
 He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the court,
 Sir Gawain—there he waits below the wall,
 Blowing his bugle as who should say him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro' open door
 Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courteously.
 'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,' said he,
 'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'
 'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good knight,
 But never let me bide one hour at peace.'
 'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and ye be fair enow:
 But I to your dead man have given my troth,
 That whom ye loathe him will I make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about the land,
 Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering waited,
 Until the third night brought a moon
 With promise of large light on woods and ways.

The night was hot: he could not rest, but rode
 Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse
 Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,
 And no watch kept; and in thro' these he past,
 And heard but his own steps, and his own heart
 Beating, for nothing moved but his own self,
 And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,
 And saw the postern portal also wide
 Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all
 Of roses white and red, and wild ones mixt
 And overgrowing them, went on, and found,
 Here, too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,
 Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
 Came lightening downward, and so spilt itself
 Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware that white pavilions rose,
 Three from the bushes, gilden-peakt: in one,
 Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights
 Slumbering, and their three squires across their feet:
 In one, their malice on the placid lip
 Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels lay:
 And in the third, the circlet of the jousts
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew:
 Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears

To cope with, or a traitor proven,
 or hound
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter
 shame
 Creep with his shadow thro' the
 court again,
 Fingering at his sword-handle until
 he stood
 There on the castle-bridge once
 more, and thought,
 'I will go back, and slay them
 where they lie.'

And so went back and seeing
 them yet in sleep
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the
 holy sleep,
 Your sleep is death,' and drew
 the sword, and thought,
 'What! slay a sleeping knight?
 the King hath bound
 And sworn me to his brotherhood"
 again,
 'Alas that ever a knight should
 be so false.'
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
 groaning laid
 The naked sword athwart their
 naked throats,
 There left it, and them sleeping;
 and she lay,
 The circlet of the tourney round
 her brows,
 And the sword of the tourney
 across her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting
 on his horse
 Stared at her towers that, larger
 than themselves
 In their own darkness, throng'd
 into the moon.
 Then crush'd the saddle with his
 thighs, and clench'd
 His hands, and madden'd with
 himself and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against
 me in their blood
 At the last day? I might have
 answer'd them
 Even before high God. O towers
 so strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while
 I gaze
 The crack of earthquake shivering
 to your base
 Split you, and Hell burst up your
 harlot roofs
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro'
 and thro' within,
 Black as the harlot's heart—hol-
 low as a skull!
 Let the fierce east scream thro'
 your eyelet-holes,
 And whirl the dust of harlots round
 and round
 In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—
 I saw him there—
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.
 Who yells
 Here in the still sweet summer
 night, but I—
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd
 her fool?
 Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself
 most fool;
 Beast, too, as lacking human wit
 —disgraced,
 Dishonour'd all for trial of true
 love—
 Love?—we be all alike: only the
 King
 Hath made us fools and liars. O
 noble vows!
 O great and sane and simple race
 of brutes
 That own no lust because they
 have no law!
 For why should I have loved her
 to my shame?
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my
 shame.
 I never loved her, I but lusted for
 her—
 Away——'

He dash'd the rowel into his
 horse,
 And bounded forth and vanish'd
 thro' the night.

Then she, that felt the cold
 touch on her throat,
 Awakening knew the sword, and
 turn'd herself

To Gawain : 'Liar, for thou hast
not slain
This Pelleas ! here he stood, and
might have slain
Me and thyself.' And he that
tells the tale
Says that her ever-veering fancy
turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight
on earth,
And only lover ; and thro' her love
her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in
vain.

But he by wild and way, for
half the night,
And over hard and soft, striking
the sod
From out the soft, the spark from
off the hard,
Rode till the star above the
wakening sun,
Beside that tower where Percivale
was cowl'd,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of
the dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into
his heart
He knew not whence or where-
fore : 'O sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the
dawn.'
And there he would have wept,
but felt his eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain
bed
In summer : thither came the
village girls
And linger'd talking, and they
come no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd
it from the heights
Again with living waters in the
change
Of seasons : hard his eyes ; harder
his heart
Seem'd ; but so weary were his
limbs, that he,
Gasping, Of Arthur's hall am I,
but here,
Here let me rest and die, cast
himself down,

And gulph'd his griefs in inmost
sleep ; so lay,
Till shaken by a dream, that
Gawain fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morn-
ing star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into
flame, and fell.

He woke, and being ware of
some one nigh,
Sent hands upon him, as to tear
him, crying
'False ! and I held thee pure as
Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him
and replied,
'Am I but false as Guinevere is
pure ?
Or art thou mazed with dreams ?
or being one
Of our free-spoken Table hast not
heard
That Lancelot'—there he check'd
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as
with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and
the sword
That made it plunges thro' the
wound again,
And pricks it deeper : and he
shrank and wail'd,
'Is the Queen false ?' and Perci-
vale was mute.
'Have any of our Round Table
held their vows ?'
And Percivale made answer not a
word.
'Is the King true ?' 'The King !'
said Percivale.
'Why then let men couple at
once with wolves.
What ! art thou mad ?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted
on his horse
And fled : small pity upon his
horse had he,
Or on himself, or any, and when
he met

A cripple, one that held a hand for
 alms—
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old
 dwarf-elm
 That turns its back on the salt
 blast, the boy
 Paused not, but overrode him,
 shouting 'False,
 And false with Gawain!' and so
 left him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill
 and wood
 Went ever streaming by him till
 the gloom,
 That follows on the turning of the
 world,
 Darken'd the common path: he
 twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast that better
 knew it, swerve
 Now off it and now on; but when
 he saw
 High up in heaven the hall that
 Merlin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green
 stripes of even,
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd,
 'ye build too high.'

Not long thereafter from the
 city gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting
 from the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at
 a star
 And marvelling what it was: on
 whom the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-
 grass
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, say-
 ing, 'What name hast thou
 That ridest here so blindly and so
 hard?'
 'I have no name,' he shouted,
 'a scourge am I,
 To lash the treasons of the Table
 Round.'
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have
 many names,' he cried:
 'I am wrath and shame and hate
 and evil fame,
 And like a poisonous wind I pass
 to blast

And blaze the crime of Lancelot
 and the Queen.'
 'First over me,' said Lancelot,
 'shalt thou pass.'
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the other
 and either knight
 Drew back a space, and when they
 closed, at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas floun-
 dering flung
 His rider, who called out from the
 dark field,
 'Thou art false as Hell: slay me:
 I have no sword.'
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy
 lips—and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy
 death.'
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will
 is to be slain.'
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon
 the fall'n,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood,
 then spake:
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot;
 say thy say.'

And Lancelot slowly rode his
 war-horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in
 brief while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from
 the dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It
 chanced that both
 Brake into hall together, worn and
 pale.
 There with her knights and dames
 was Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on
 Lancelot
 So soon return'd, and then on
 Pelleas, him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast
 himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing.
 'Have ye fought?'
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my
 Queen,' he said.
 'And thou has overthrown him?'
 'Ay, my Queen.'
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O
 young knight,

Hath the great heart of knight-
 hood in thee fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-
 wardly,
 A fall from him ?' Then, for he
 answer'd not,
 'Or hast thou other griefs ? If I,
 the Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue,
 and let me know.'
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so
 fierce
 She quail'd; and he, hissing 'I
 have no sword,'
 Sprang from the door into the
 dark. The Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on
 her;
 And each foresaw the dolorous day
 to be :
 And all talk died, as in a grove all
 song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird
 of prey;
 Then a long silence came upon the
 hall,
 And Modred thought, 'The time
 is hard at hand.'

GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the
 court, and sat
 There in the holy house at Almes-
 bury
 Weeping, none with her save a
 little maid,
 A novice : one low light betwixt
 them burn'd,
 Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for
 all abroad,
 Beneath a moon unseen albeit at
 full,
 The white mist, like a face-cloth
 to the face,
 Clung to the dead earth, and the
 land was still.

For hither had she fled, her
 cause of flight
 Sir Modred; he the nearest to the
 King,

His nephew, ever like a subtle
 beast,
 Lay couchant with his eyes upon
 the throne,
 Ready to spring, waiting a chance :
 for this,
 He chill'd the popular praises of
 the King
 With silent smiles of slow dis-
 paragement;
 And tamper'd with the Lords of
 the White Horse,
 Heathen, the brood by Hengist
 left; and sought
 To make disruption in the Table
 Round
 Of Arthur, and to splinter it into
 feuds
 Serving his traitorous end; and
 all his aims
 Were sharpen'd by strong hate
 for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn
 when all the court,
 Green-suited, but with plumes
 that mock'd the may,
 Had been, their wont, a-maying
 and returned,
 That Modred still in green, all ear
 and eye,
 Climb'd to the high top of the
 garden-wall
 To spy some secret scandal if he
 might,
 And saw the Queen who sat
 betwixt her best
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her
 court
 The wildest and the worst; and
 more than this
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot
 passing by
 Spied where he couch'd, and as
 the gardener's hand
 Picks from the colewort a green
 caterpillar,
 So from the high wall and the
 flowering grove
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him
 by the heel,
 And cast him as a worm upon the
 way;

But when he knew the Prince tho'
 marr'd with dust,
 He, reverencing king's blood in a
 bad man,
 Made such excuses as he might,
 and these
 Full knightly without scorn; for
 in those days
 No knight of Arthur's noblest
 dealt in scorn;
 But, if a man were halt or hunch'd,
 in him
 By those whom God had made
 full-limb'd and tall,
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his
 defect,
 And he was answer'd softly by
 the King
 And all his Table. So Sir Lance-
 lot help
 To raise the Prince, who rising
 twice or thrice
 Full sharply smote his knees, and
 smiled, and went :
 But, ever after, the small violence
 done
 Rankled in him and ruffled all
 his heart,
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all
 day long
 A little bitter pool about a stone
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
 This matter to the Queen, at first
 she laugh'd
 Lightly, to think of Modred's
 dusty fall,
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife
 who cries
 'I shudder, someone steps across
 my grave;'
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier,
 for indeed
 She half-foresaw that he, the
 subtle beast,
 Would track her guilt until he
 found, and hers
 Would be for evermore a name of
 scorn.
 Henceforward rarely could she
 front in Hall,
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow
 fovy face,

Heart-hiding smile, and grey per-
 sistent eye :
 Henceforward too, the Powers
 that tend the soul,
 To help it from the death that
 cannot die,
 And save it even in extremes,
 began
 To vex and plague her. Many a
 time for hours,
 Beside the placid breathings of the
 King,
 In the dead night, grim faces came
 and went
 Before her, or a vague spiritual
 fear—
 Like to some doubtful noise of
 creaking doors,
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted
 house,
 That keeps the rust of murder on
 the walls—
 Held her awake : or if she slept,
 she dream'd
 An awful dream; for then she
 seem'd to stand
 On some vast plain before a setting
 sun,
 And from the sun there swiftly
 made at her
 A ghastly something, and its
 shadow flew
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and
 she turn'd—
 When lo ! her own, that broaden-
 ing from her feet,
 And blackening, swallow'd all the
 land, and in it
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry
 she woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass
 but grew ;
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guile-
 less King,
 And trustful courtesies of house-
 hold life,
 Became her bane ; and at the last
 she said,
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to
 thine own land,
 For if thou tarry we shall meet
 again,
 And if we meet again, some evil
 chance

Will make the smouldering scandal
 break and blaze
 Before the people, and our lord
 the King.'
 And Lancelot ever promised, but
 remain'd,
 And still they met and met.
 Again she said,
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get
 thee hence.'
 And then they were agreed upon
 a night
 (When the good King should not
 be there) to meet
 And part for ever. Passion-pale
 they met
 And greeted : hands in hands, and
 eye to eye,
 Low on the border of her couch
 they sat
 Stammering and staring : it was
 their last hour,
 A madness of farewells. And
 Modred brought
 His creatures to the basement of
 the tower
 For testimony ; and crying with
 full voice
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt
 at last,' aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward
 lionlike
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him
 headlong, and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took
 and bare him off
 And all was still : then she, 'the
 end is come
 And I am shamed for ever ;' and
 he said,
 'Mine be the shame ; mine was the
 sin : but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle over-
 seas :
 There will I hide thee, till my life
 shall end,
 There hold thee with my life
 against the world.'
 She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou
 hold me so ?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our
 farewells.
 Would God, that thou could'st
 hide me from myself !

Mine is the shame, for I was wife,
 and thou
 Unwedded : yet rise now, and let
 us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanc-
 tuary,
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot
 got her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on
 his own,
 And then they rode to the divided
 way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping :
 for he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen,
 Back to his land ; but she to
 Almesbury
 Fled all night long by glimmering
 waste and weald,
 And heard the Spirits of the waste
 and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she
 heard them moan :
 And in herself she moan'd 'too
 late, too late !'
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns
 the morn,
 A blot in heaven, the Raven,
 flying high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He
 spies a field of death ;
 For now the Heathen of the
 Northern Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties
 of the court,
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil
 the land.'

And when she came to Almes-
 bury she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine
 enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sister-
 hood,
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary,
 nor ask
 Her name, to whom ye yield it, till
 her time
 To tell you : and her beauty,
 grace and power,
 Wrought as a charm upon them,
 and they spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown,
 among the nuns;
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
 name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or
 for shrift,
 But communed only with the
 little maid,
 Who pleased her with a babbling
 heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself;
 but now,
 This night, a rumour wildly blown
 about
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd
 the realm,
 And leagued him with the heathen,
 while the King
 Was waging war on Lancelot:
 then she thought,
 'With what a hate the people and
 the King
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down
 upon her hands
 Silent, until the little maid, who
 brook'd
 No silence, brake it, uttering 'late!
 so late!
 What hour, I wonder, now?' and
 when she drew
 No answer, by and by began to hum
 An air the nuns had taught her;
 'late, so late!'
 Which when she heard, the Queen
 look'd up, and said,
 'O maiden, if indeed you list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I
 may weep.'
 Whereat full willingly sang the
 little maid.
 'Late, late, so late! and dark
 the night and chill!
 Late, late, so late! but we can
 enter still.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot
 enter now.
 'No light had we: for that we do
 repent;
 And learning this, the bridegroom
 will relent.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot
 enter now.

'No light: so late! and dark
 and chill the night!
 O let us in, that we may find the
 light!

Too late, too late: ye cannot
 enter now.

'Have we not heard the bride-
 groom is so sweet?
 O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his
 feet!
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.'

So sang the novice, while full
 passionately,
 Her head upon her hands, remem-
 bering
 Her thought when first she came,
 wept the sad Queen.
 Then said the little novice pratt-
 ling to her.

'O pray you, noble lady, weep
 no more;
 But let my words, the words of
 one so small,
 Who knowing nothing knows but
 to obey,
 And if I do not there is penance
 given—
 Comfort your sorrows; for they do
 not flow
 From evil done; right sure am I
 of that,
 Who see your tender grace and
 stateliness.
 But weigh your sorrows with our
 lord the King's,
 And weighing find them less; for
 gone is he
 To wage grim war against Sir
 Lancelot there,
 Round that strong castle where he
 holds the Queen;
 And Modred whom he left in
 charge of all,
 The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the
 King's grief
 For his own self, and his own
 Queen, and realm,
 Must needs be thrice as great as
 any of ours.
 For me, I thank the saints, I am
 not great.

For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have
done :

None knows it, and my tears have
brought me good :

But even were the griefs of little
ones

As great as those of great ones, yet
this grief

Is added to the griefs the great
must bear,

That howsoever much they may
desire

Silence, they cannot weep behind
a cloud :

As even here they talk at Almes-
bury

About the good King and his
wicked Queen,

And were I such a King with such
a Queen,

Well might I wish to veil her
wickedness,

But were I such a King, it could
not be.'

Then to her own sad heart
mutter'd the Queen,

'Will the child kill me with her
innocent talk ?'

But openly she answer'd 'must
not I,

If this false traitor have displaced
his lord,

Grieve with the common grief of
all the realm ?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this is all
woman's grief,

That *she* is woman, whose disloyal
life

Hath wrought confusion in the
Table Round

Which good King Arthur founded,
years ago,

With signs and miracles and
wonders, there

At Camelot, ere the coming of the
Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within
herself again,

'Will the child kill me with her
foolish prate ?'

But openly she spake and said to
her,

'O little maid, shut in by nunnery
walls,

What canst thou know of Kings
and Tables Round,

Or what of signs and wonders, but
the signs

And simple miracles of thy nun-
nery ?'

To whom the little novice
garrulously :

'Yea, but I know : the land was
full of signs

And wonders ere the coming of
the Queen.

So said my father, and himself
was knight

Of the great Table—at the found-
ing of it ;

And rode thereto from Lyonesse,
and he said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe
twain

After the sunset, down the coast,
he heard

Strange music, and he paused and
turning—there,

All down the lonely coast of
Lyonesse,

Each with a beacon-star upon his
head,

And with a wild sea-light about
his feet,

He saw them—headland after
headland flame

Far on into the rich heart of the
west :

And in the light the white mer-
maiden swam,

And strong man-breasted things
stood from the sea,

And sent a deep sea-voice thro'
all the land,

To which the little elves of chasm
and cleft

Made answer, sounding like a
distant horn.

So said my father—yea, and
furthermore,

Next morning, while he past the
dim-lit woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad
 with joy
 Come dashing down on a tall
 wayside flower,
 That shook beneath them, as the
 thistle shakes
 When three grey linnets wrangle
 for the seed :
 And still at evenings on before his
 horse
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd
 and broke
 Flying, and link'd again, and
 wheel'd and broke
 Flying, for all the land was full
 of life.
 And when at last he came to
 Camelot,
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-
 hand
 Swung round the lighted lantern
 of the hall;
 And in the hall itself was such a
 feast
 As never man had dream'd; for
 every knight
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd
 for served
 By hands unseen; and even as he
 said
 Down in the cellars merry bloated
 things
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling
 on the butts
 While the wine ran : so glad were
 spirits and men
 Before the coming of the sinful
 Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and
 somewhat bitterly,
 'Were they so glad? ill prophets
 were they all,
 Spirits and men: could none of
 them foresee,
 Not even thy wise father with his
 signs
 And wonders, what has fall'n
 upon the realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously
 again.
 'Yea, one, a bard; of whom my
 father said,

Full many a noble war-song had
 he sung,
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's
 fleet,
 Between the steep cliff and the
 coming wave;
 And many a mystic lay of life
 and death
 Had chanted on the smoky moun-
 tain-tops,
 When round him bent the spirits
 of the hills
 With all their dewy hair blown
 back like flame :
 So said my father—and that night
 the bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and
 sang the King
 As well-nigh more than man, and
 rail'd at those
 Who call'd him the false son of
 Gorlois :
 For there was no man knew from
 whence he came;
 But after tempest, when the long
 wave broke
 All down the thundering shores
 of Bude and Bos,
 There came a day as still as heaven,
 and then
 They found a naked child upon
 the sands
 Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish
 sea;
 And that was Arthur; and they
 foster'd him
 Till he by miracle was approven
 king :
 And that his grave should be a
 mystery
 From all men, like his birth; and
 could he find
 A woman in her womanhood as
 great
 As he was in his manhood, then,
 he sang,
 The twain together well might
 change the world.
 But even in the middle of his
 song
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from
 the harp,
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd,
 and would have fall'n,

But that they stay'd him up; nor
would he tell
His vision; but what doubt that
he foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the
Queen?'

Then thought the Queen 'Lo!
they have set her on,
Our simple-seeming Abbess and
her nuns,
To play upon me,' and bow'd her
head nor spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with
clasp'd hands,
Shame on her own garrulity
garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check
her gadding tongue
Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I
seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to
me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and
the tales
Which my good father told me,
check me too:
Nor let me shame my father's
memory, one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself
would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and
he died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five
summers back,
And left me; but of others who
remain,
And of the two first-famed for
courtesy—
And pray you check me if I ask
amiss—
But pray you, which had noblest,
while you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord
the King?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up
and answer'd her.
'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble
knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the
same
In open battle or the tilting-
field

Forbore his own advantage, and
the King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and
these two
Were the most nobly-manner'd
men of all;
For manners are not idle, but the
fruit
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be man-
ners such fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a
thousand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumour
runs.
The most disloyal friend in all the
world.'

To which a mournful answer
made the Queen:
'O closed about by narrowing
nunnery-walls,
What knowest thou of the world,
and all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and
all the woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble
knight,
Were for one hour less noble than
himself,
Pray for him that he scape the
doom of fire,
And weep for her, who drew him
to his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I
pray for both;
But I should all as soon believe
that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as
the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady,
yours would be
Such as they are, were you the
sinful Queen.'

So she, like many another
babblor, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and
harm'd where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful
heat

Fired all the pale face of the Queen
 who cried,
 'Such as thou art be never maiden
 more
 For ever! thou their tool, set on
 to plague
 And play upon, and harry me,
 petty spy
 And traitress.' When that storm
 of anger brake
 From Guinevere, aghast the
 maiden rose,
 White as her veil, and stood before
 the Queen
 As tremulously as foam upon the
 beach
 Stands in a wind, ready to break
 and fly,
 And when the Queen had added
 'Get thee hence,'
 Fled frightened. Then that other
 left alone
 Sigh'd, and began to gather heart
 again,
 Saying in herself, 'The simple,
 fearful child
 Meant nothing, but my own too-
 fearful guilt,
 Simpler than any child, betrays
 itself.
 But help me, heaven, for surely
 I repent.
 For what is true repentance but
 in thought—
 Not ev'n in inmost thought to
 think again
 The sins that made the past so
 pleasant to us:
 And I have sworn never to see
 him more,
 To see him more.'

And ev'n in saying this,
 Her memory from old habit of the
 mind
 Went slipping back upon the
 golden days
 In which she saw him first, when
 Lancelot came,
 Reputed the best knight and
 goodliest man,
 Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
 Arthur, and led her forth, and far
 ahead

Of his and her retinue moving,
 they,
 Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all
 on love
 And sport and tilts and pleasure,
 (for the time
 Was maytime, and as yet no sin
 was dream'd,)
 Rode under groves that look'd as
 paradise
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
 That seem'd the heavens upbreak-
 ing thro' the earth,
 And on from hill to hill, and every
 day
 Beheld at noon in some delicious
 dale
 The silk pavilions of King Arthur
 raised
 For brief repast or afternoon
 repose
 By couriers gone before; and on
 again,
 Till yet once more ere set of
 sun they saw
 The Dragon of the great Pen-
 dragonship,
 That crown'd the state pavilion
 of the King,
 Blaze by the rushing brook or
 silent well.

But when the Queen immersed
 in such a trance,
 And moving thro' the past uncon-
 sciously,
 Came to that point, when first
 she saw the King
 Ride toward her from the city,
 sigh'd to find
 Her journey done, glanced at him,
 thought him cold,
 High, self-contain'd, and passion-
 less, not like him,
 'Not like my Lancelot'—while
 she brooded thus
 And grew half-guilty in her
 thoughts again,
 There rode an armed warrior
 to the doors.
 A murmuring whisper thro' the
 nunnery ran,
 Then on a sudden a cry, 'the
 King.' She sat

Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when
 armed feet
 Thro' the long gallery from the
 outer doors
 Rang coming, prone from off her
 seat she fell,
 And grovell'd with her face against
 the floor :
 There with her milkwhite arms
 and shadowy hair
 She made her face a darkness from
 the King :
 And in the darkness heard his
 armed feet
 Pause by her ; then came silence,
 then a voice,
 Monotonous and hollow like a
 Ghost's
 Denouncing judgment, but tho'
 changed the King's.

'Liest thou here so low, the
 child of one
 I honour'd, happy, dead before
 thy shame ?
 Well is it that no child is born of
 thee.
 The children born of thee are
 sword and fire,
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of
 laws,
 The craft of kindred and the
 Godless hosts
 Of heathen swarming o'er the
 Northern Sea.
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot,
 my right arm,
 The mightiest of my knights, abode
 with me,
 Have everywhere about this land
 of Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining
 overthrown.
 And knowest thou now from
 whence I come—from him,
 From waging bitter war with him :
 and he,
 That did not shun to smite me
 in worse way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy
 in him left,
 He spared to lift his hand against
 the King

Who made him knight : but many
 a knight was slain ;
 And many more, and all his kith
 and kin
 Clave to him, and abode in his own
 land.
 And many more when Modred
 raised revolt,
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
 clave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays
 with me.
 And of this remnant will I leave
 a part,
 True men who love me still, for
 whom I live,
 To guard thee in the wild hour
 coming on,
 Lest but a hair of this low head
 be harm'd.
 Fear not : thou shalt be guarded
 till my death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient
 prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to
 meet my doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so
 sweet to me,
 That I the King should greatly
 care to live ;
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose
 of my life.
 Bear with me for the last time
 while I show,
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which
 thou hast sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and
 their law
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the
 ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and
 there a deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a
 random wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who
 drew
 The knighthood-errant of this
 realm and all
 The realms together under me,
 their Head,
 In that fair order of my Table
 Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of
 men,

To serve as model for the mighty
 world,
 And be the fair beginning of a
 time.
 I made them lay their hands in
 mine and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he
 were
 Their conscience, and their con-
 science as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold
 the Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen
 to it,
 To lead sweet lives in purest
 chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave
 to her,
 And worship her by years of noble
 deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I
 knew
 Of no more subtle master under
 heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a
 maid,
 Not only to keep down the base
 in man,
 But teach high thought, and
 amiable words
 And courtliness, and the desire of
 fame,
 And love of truth, and all that
 makes a man.
 And all this throve until I wedded
 thee!
 Believing "lo mine helpmate, one
 to feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my
 joy."
 Then came thy shameful sin with
 Lancelot;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and
 Isolt;
 Then others, following these my
 mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from
 fair names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome
 opposite
 Of all my heart had destined did
 obtain,

And all thro' thee! so that thi
 life of mine
 I guard as God's high gift from
 scathe and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but
 rather think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should
 he live,
 To sit once more within his loneli
 hall,
 And miss the wonted number of
 my knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of nobl
 deeds
 As in the golden days before thi
 sin.
 For which of us, who might be
 left, could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to
 glance at thee?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot co
 of Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from
 room to room,
 And I should evermore be vex
 with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant orna
 ment,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on thi
 stair.
 For think not, tho' thou would'st
 not love thy lord,
 Thy lord has wholly lost his lov
 for thee.
 I am not made of so slight ele
 ments.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to
 thy shame.
 I hold that man the worst of
 public foes
 Who either for his own or chi
 dren's sake,
 To save his blood from scandal
 lets the wife
 Whom he knows false, abide and
 rule the house:
 For being thro' his cowardie
 allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere fo
 pure,
 She like a new disease, unknow
 to men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, amon
 the crowd,

Makes wicked lightnings of her
 eyes, and saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs
 the pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons
 half the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man
 he that reigns!
 Better the King's waste hearth
 and aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of
 light,
 The mockery of my people, and
 their bane.'

He paused, and in the pause she
 crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about
 his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the
 warhorse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake
 again :

'Yet think not that I come to
 urge thy crimes,
 I did not come to curse thee,
 Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes
 me die
 To see thee, laying there thy
 golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at
 my feet.
 The wrath which forced my
 thoughts on that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the
 flaming death,
 (When first I learnt thee hidden
 here) is past.
 The pang—which while I weigh'd
 thy heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth
 in thee,
 Made my tears burn—is also past,
 in part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd,
 and I,
 Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives : do thou for thine own
 soul the rest.
 But how to take last leave of all
 I loved ?

O golden hair, with which I used
 to play
 Not knowing ! O imperial-mould-
 ed form,
 And beauty such as never woman
 wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse
 with thee—
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are
 not mine,
 But Lancelot's : nay, they never
 were the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too
 is flesh,
 And in the flesh thou has sinn'd ;
 and mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine pol-
 luted, cries
 "I loathe thee" : yet not less, O
 Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for
 thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought
 into my life
 So far, that my doom is, I love
 thee still.
 Let no man dream but that I love
 thee still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy
 soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair
 father Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all
 are pure
 We two may meet before high
 God, and thou
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me
 thine, and know
 I am thine husband—not a smaller
 soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave
 me that,
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now
 must I hence.
 Thro' the thick night I hear the
 trumpet blow :
 They summon me their King to
 lead mine hosts
 Far down to that great battle in
 the west,
 Where I must strike against my
 sister's son,
 Leagued with the lords of the
 White Horse and knights

Once mine, and strike him dead,
 and meet myself
 Death, or I know not what mys-
 terious doom.
 And thou remaining here wilt
 learn the event;
 But hither shall I never come
 again,
 Never lie by thy side, see thee no
 more,
 Farewell !'

And while she grovelling at his feet,
 She felt the King's breath wander
 o'er her neck,
 And, in the darkness o'er her
 fallen head,
 Perceived the waving of his hands
 that blest.

Then, listening till those armed
 steps were gone,
 Rose the pale Queen, and in her
 anguish found
 The casement: 'peradventure,'
 so she thought,
 'If I might see his face, and not be
 seen.'
 And lo, he sat on horseback at the
 door !
 And near him the sad nuns with
 each a light
 Stood, and he gave them charge
 about the Queen,
 To guard and foster her for ever-
 more.
 And while he spake to these his
 helm was lowered,
 To which for crest the golden
 dragon clung
 Of Britain; so she did not see the
 face,
 Which then was as an angel's, but
 she saw,
 Wet with the mists and smitten by
 the lights,
 The Dragon of the great Pen-
 dragonship
 Blaze, making all the night a
 steam of fire.
 And even then he turn'd; and
 more and more
 The moony vapour rolling round
 the King,

Who seem'd the phantom of a
 Giant in it,
 Enwound him fold by fold, and
 made him grey
 And greyer, till himself became as
 mist
 Before her, moving ghostlike to
 his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms
 and cried aloud
 'Oh Arthur!' there her voice
 brake suddenly,
 Then—as a stream that spouting
 from a cliff
 Fails in mid air, but gathering at
 the base
 Re-makes itself, and flashes down
 the vale—
 Went on in passionate utterance.

'Gone—my lord !
 Gone thro' my sin to slay and to
 be slain !
 And he forgave me, and I could
 not speak.
 Farewell ? I should have answer'd
 his farewell.
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my
 lord the King,
 My own true lord ! how dare I call
 him mine ?
 The shadow of another cleaves to
 me,
 And makes me one pollution : he,
 the King,
 Call'd me polluted : shall I kill
 myself ?
 What help in that ? I cannot kill
 my sin,
 If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my
 shame ;
 No, nor by living can I live it
 down.
 The days will grow to weeks, the
 weeks to months,
 The months will add themselves
 and make the years,
 The years will roll into the cen-
 turies,
 And mine will ever be a name of
 scorn.
 I must not dwell on that defeat
 of fame.

Let the world be ; that is but of the world.
 What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope ;
 His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope
 That in mine own heart I can live down sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
 Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights—
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
 Full easily all impressions from below,
 Would not look up, or half-despised the height
 To which I would not or I could not climb—
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air
 That pure severity of perfect light—
 I wanted warmth and colour which I found
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late ?
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle ? none :
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
 What might I not have made of thy fair world,

Had I but loved thy highest creature here ?
 It was my duty to have loved the highest :
 It surely was my profit had I known :
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'
 Here her hand
 Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes : she look'd and saw
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven ?'
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
 All round her, weeping ; and her heart was loosed
 Within her, and she wept with these and said :

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the King.
 O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying "shame."
 I must not scorn myself : he loves me still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you ;
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you ;
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts ;
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,
 But not rejoicing ; mingle with your rites ;
 Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before your shrines ;
 Do each low office of your holy house ;

Walk your dim cloister, and dis-
tribute dole
To poor sick people, richer in His
eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too
than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts
and heal mine own;
And so wear out in almsdeed and
in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptu-
ous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my
lord the King.'

She said : they took her to them-
selves; and she
Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too
late ?'
Dwelt with them, till in time their
Abbess died.
Then she, for her good deeds and
her pure life,
And for the power of ministration
in her,
And likewise for the high rank she
had borne,
Was chosen Abbess, there, an
Abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there,
an Abbess, past
To where beyond these voices
there is peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir
Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the
knights,
Told, when the man was no more
than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to
those
With whom he dwelt, new faces,
other minds.

Before that last weird battle in
the west
There came on Arthur sleeping,
Gawain kill'd

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of
Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past
his ear
Went shrilling 'Hollow, hollow all
delight !
Hail, King ! to-morrow thou shalt
pass away.
Farewell ! there is an isle of rest
for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering
wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all
delight.'
And fainter onward, like wild
birds that change
Their season in the night and wail
their way
From cloud to cloud, down the
long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled
with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the
hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by
night,
When all is lost, and wife and
child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur
woke and call'd,
'Who spake ? A dream. O light
upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—
are these dim cries
Thine ? or doth all that haunts
the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along
with me ?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere
and spake :
'O me, my King, let pass whatever
will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour
of the field;
But in their stead thy name and
glory cling
To all high places like a golden
cloud
For ever : but as yet thou shalt
not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light
in death

Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
 And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
 And with him many of thy people, and knights
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 'Far other is this battle in the west
 Where to we move, than when we strove in youth,
 And thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
 To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights himself.
 And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
 That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonnesse—
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
 And the long mountains ended in a coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,
 And he that fled no further fly the King;
 And there, that day when the great light of heaven
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
 A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea;
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
 With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,
 For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
 And some had visions out of golden youth,
 And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
 Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash

Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms,
 and shrieks
 After the Christ, of those who
 falling down
 Looked up for heaven, and only
 saw the mist;
 And shouts of heathen and the
 traitor knights,
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous
 blasphemies,
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, lab-
 ouring of the lungs
 In that close mist, and cryings for
 the light,
 Moans of the dying, and voices of
 the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed
 after wail
 Of suffering, silence follows, or
 thro' death
 Or deathlike swoon, thus over all
 that shore,
 Save for some whisper of the
 seething seas,
 A dead hush fell; but when the
 dolorous day
 Grew drearier toward twilight
 falling, came
 A bitter wind, clear from the
 North, and blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind
 the tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced
 across the field
 Of battle: but no man was moving
 there;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard
 thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
 wave
 Brake in among dead faces, to and
 fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and
 up and down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of
 the fallen,
 And shiver'd brands that once had
 fought with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy
 shores
 The voice of days of old and days
 to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere,
 And whiter than the mist that all
 day long
 Had held the field of battle was
 the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice
 that shakes the world,
 And wastes the narrow realm
 whereon we move,
 And beats upon the faces of the
 dead,
 My dead, as tho' they had not
 died for me?—
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath
 fall'n
 Confusion, till I know not what I
 am,
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I
 be King.
 Behold, I seem but king among
 the dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere: 'My King,
 King everywhere! and so the
 dead have kings,
 There also will I worship thee as
 King.
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still
 I live
 Who love thee; but who hates thee,
 he that brought
 The heathen back among us,
 yonder stands,
 Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of
 thine house.'

Then spake the King: 'My
 house hath been my doom.
 But call not thou this traitor of
 my house
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one
 roof with me.
 My house are rather they who
 swear my vows,
 Yea, even while they brake them,
 own'd me King.
 And well for thee, saying in my
 dark hour,
 When all the purport of my throne
 hath fail'd,

That quick or dead thou holdest
me for king.

King am I, whatsoever be their
cry ;

And one last act of kinghood shalt
thou see

Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering
this the King

Made at the man ; then Modred
smote his liege

Hard on that helm which many a
heathen sword

Had beaten thin ; while Arthur at
one blow,

Striking the last stroke with
Excalibur,

Slew him, and all but slain himself,
he fell.

So all day long the noise of
battle roll'd

Among the mountains by the
winter sea ;

Until King Arthur's Table, man by
man,

Had fall'n in Lyonesse about
their lord,

King Arthur. Then, because his
wound was deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted
him,

And bore him to a chapel nigh
the field,

A broken chancel with a broken
cross,

That stood on a dark strait of
barren land :

On one side lay the Ocean, and on
one

Lay a great water, and the moon
was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere :

'The sequel of to-day unsolders
all

The goodliest fellowship of famous
knights

Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I
think that we

Shall never more, at any future
time,

Delight our souls with talk of
knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and
the halls

Of Camelot, as in the days that
were.

I perish by this people which I
made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should
come again

To rule once more ; but let what
will be, be.

I am so deeply smitten thro' the
helm

That without help I cannot last till
morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Ex-
calibur,

Which was my pride : for thou
rememberest how

In those old days, one summer
noon, an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful,

Holding the sword—and how I
row'd across

And took it, and have worn it, like
a king ;

And, wheresoever I am sung or
told

In aftertime, this also shall be
known :

But now delay not : take Ex-
calibur,

And fling him far into the middle
mere :

Watch what thou seest, and
lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
vere :

'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave
thee thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro'
the helm—

A little thing may harm a wound-
ed man ;

Yet I thy hest will all perform at
full,

Watch what I see, and lightly
bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd
 shrine he stept,
 And in the moon athwart the
 place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of
 ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the
 sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam.
 He, stepping down
 By zig-zag paths, and juts of
 pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the
 lake.

There drew he forth the brand
 Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the
 winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long
 cloud, ran forth
 And sparkled keen with frost
 against the hilt :
 For all the haft twinkled with dia-
 mond sparks,
 Myriads of topaz - lights, and
 jacinth-work
 Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled
 as he stood,
 This way and that dividing the
 swift mind,
 In act to throw : but at the last it
 seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
 There in the many-knotted water-
 flags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about
 the marge.
 So strode he back slow to the
 wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere :
 'Hast thou perform'd my mission
 which I gave ?
 What is it thou hast seen ? or
 what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir
 Bedivere :
 'I heard the ripple washing in the
 reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the
 crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
 faint and pale :
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature
 and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as be-
 seem'd,
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble
 knight :
 For surer sign had follow'd, either
 hand
 Or voice, or else a motion of the
 mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men
 to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
 again,
 As thou art lief and dear, and do
 the thing
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly
 bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the
 second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside
 the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd
 in thought ;
 But when he saw the wonder of
 the hilt,
 How curiously and strangely
 chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried
 aloud :

'And if indeed I cast the brand
 away,
 Surely a precious thing, one
 worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from
 the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes
 of many men.
 What good should follow this, if
 this were done ?
 What harm undone ? Deep harm
 to disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of
 rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king
 demand
 An act unprofitable, against him-
 self ?
 The King is sick, and knows not
 what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldest betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern moon,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere :
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids,
lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I
never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere,
till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him ;
But when I look'd again, behold
an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under
in the mere.']
And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard :
'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that
I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to
receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I
fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he
half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,
And looking wistfully with wide
blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his
tears,
And would have spoken, but he
found not words ;
Then took with care, and kneeling
on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the
languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the
place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on
his bed

When all the house is mute. So
sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his
ear 'Quick, quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall
die.'
But the other swiftly strode from
ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and
looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen
hills.
He heard the deep behind him,
and a cry
Before. His own thought drove
him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
caves
And barren chasms, and all to
left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round
him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag
that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of
armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo ! the level
lake,
And the long glories of the winter
moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem
to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending
they were ware
That all the decks were dense with
stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like
a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold :
and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
stars,
And, as it were one voice, an
agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that
shrills
All night in a waste land, where no
one comes.
Or hath come, since the making of
the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place
me in the barge';
So to the barge they came. There
those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took
the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of
them all
And fairest, laid his head upon
her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque,
and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, com-
plaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against
his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all
his face was white
And colourless, and like the
wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the
springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses
dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and
lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a
rising sun
High from the daïs-throne—were
parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging
loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth
that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the
King;
Not like that Arthur who, with
lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of
tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of
kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir
Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither
shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead
and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times
are dead,

When every morning brought a
noble chance,
And every chance brought out a
noble knight.
Such times have been not since
the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of
myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table
is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world;
And I, the last, go forth com-
panionless,
And the days darken round me,
and the years,
Among new men, strange faces,
other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur
from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many
ways,
Lest one good custom should cor-
rupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is
in me?
I have lived my life, and that
which I have done
May He within Himself make
pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,
Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night
and day.
For what are men better than
sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within
the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not
hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those
who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is
every way
Bound by gold chains about the
feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a
 long way
 With these thou seest—if indeed
 I go
 (For all my mind is clouded with a
 doubt)—
 To the island-valley of Avilion;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
 snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but
 it lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
 orchard lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with
 summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my
 grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with
 oar and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some
 full-breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her
 death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and
 takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood
 Sir Bedivere
 Revolving many memories, till the
 hull
 Look'd one black dot against the
 verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died
 away.

At length he groan'd, and turn-
 ing slowly clomb
 The last hard footstep of that iron
 crag;
 Thence mark'd the black hull
 moving yet, and cried,
 'He passes to be King among the
 dead,

And after healing of his grievous
 wound
 He comes again; but—if he come
 no more—
 O me, be yon dark Queens in yon
 black boat,
 Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three
 whereat we gazed
 On that high day, when, clothed
 with living light,
 They stood before his throne in
 silence, friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him
 at his need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd
 there came, but faint
 As from beyond the limit of the
 world,
 Like the last echo born of a great
 cry,
 Sounds, as if some fair city were
 one voice
 Around a king returning from his
 wars.

Thereat once more he moved
 about, and clomb
 E'en to the highest he could climb,
 and saw,
 Straining his eyes beneath an arch
 of hand,
 Or thought he saw, the speck that
 bare the King,
 Down that long water opening on
 the deep
 Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
 and go
 From less to less and vanish into
 light.
 And the new sun rose bringing the
 new year.

THE SMALLER POEMS AND SONNETS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, 1830-1869.

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

LILIAN

I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can ;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks :

So innocent-arch, so cunning-
simple,
From beneath her gather'd wimple
Glancing with black - beaded
eyes,
Till the lightning laughs dimple
The baby-roses in her
cheeks ;
Then away she flies.

III

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
Gaiety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian :
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded
lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

IV

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush
thee,
Fairly Lilian.

ISABEL

I

EYES not down-dropt nor over-
bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of
chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying,
tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the
translucent fane
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-
dispread,
Madonna-wise on eitherside
her head ;
Sweet lips whereon per-
petually did reign

The summer calm of golden
charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed
mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown
and head,
The stately flower of female forti-
tude,
Of perfect wifehood and
pure lowlihead.

II

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to
part

Error from crime; a pru-
dence to withhold;

The laws of marriage char-
acter'd in gold

Upon the blanch'd tablets of
her heart;

A love still burning upward, giving
light

To read those laws; an accent
very low

In blandishment, but a most
silver flow

Of subtle-paced counsel in
distress,

Right to the heart and brain,
tho' undescried,

Winning its way with ex-
treme gentleness

Thro' all the outworks of sus-
picious pride;

A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of
sway,

Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her
placid life,

The queen of marriage, a most
perfect wife.

III

The mellow'd reflex of a winter
moon;

A clear stream flowing with a
muddy one,

Till in its onward current it
absorbs

With swifter movement and
in purer light

The vexed eddies of its
wayward brother :

A leaning and upbearing para-
site,
Clothing the stem, which else
had fallen quite,
With cluster'd flower-bells and
ambrosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches lean-
ing on each other—
Shadow forth thee :—the
world hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types
of thee,
And thou of God in thy great
charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

ELEGIACS

Low-FLOWING breezes are roaming
the broad valley dimm'd in
the gloaming :

Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines
only the far river shines.

Creeping through blossomy rushes
and bowers of rose-blowing
bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets
babble and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly;
the grasshopper carolleth
clearly;

Deeply the turtle coos; shrilly the
owlet halloos;

Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in her
first sleep earth breathes stilly:

Over the pools in the burn water-
gnats murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth: the
glimmering water outfloweth:

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine
slope to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed be-
tween the two peaks; but the
Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds
him beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that
Hesperus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind:
bring me my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning and even; she
cometh not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where
is my sweet Rosalind ?

MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'
Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots

Were thickly crusted, one and all :

The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.

The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :

Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch

Upon the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead !'

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;

Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;

She could not look on the sweet heaven,

Either at morn or eventide.

After the fitting of the bats,

When thickest dark did trance the sky,

She drew her casement-curtain by,

And glanced athwart the glooming flats.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead !'

Upon the middle of the night,

Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light :

From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her : without hope of change,

In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,

Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn

About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall

A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,

And o'er it many, round and small,

The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook alway,

All silver-green with gnarled bark :

For leagues no other tree did mark

The level waste, the rounding grey.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead !'

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,

In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.

But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,

The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead !'

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges
 creak'd;
 The blue fly sung in the pane;
 the mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot
 shriek'd,
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the
 doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper
 floors,
 Old voices called her from without.
 She only said, 'My life is
 dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am weary,
 weary,
 I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the
 sound

Which to the wooing wind aloof
 The poplar made, did all con-
 found

Her sense; but most she loathed
 the hour

When the thick-moted sunbeam
 lay

Athwart the chambers, and the
 day

Was sloping toward his western
 bower.

Then, said she, 'I am very
 dreary,

He will not come,' she
 said;

She wept, 'I am weary,
 weary,

Oh God, that I were dead!'

TO —

I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joy-
 ful scorn,
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
 atwain

The knots that tangle human
 creeds,

The wounding cords that bind
 and strain

The heart until it bleeds,

Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
 Roof not a glance so keen
 as thine:

If aught of prophecy be
 mine,

Thou wilt not live in vain.

II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist
 sit;

Falsehood shall bare her plaited
 brow:

Fair-fronted Truth shall droop
 not now

With shrilling shafts of subtle
 wit.

Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant
 swords

Can do away that ancient lie;

A gentler death shall Falsehood
 die,

Shot thro' and thro' with cunning
 words.

III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her
 crutch,

Wan, wasted Truth in her ut-
 most need,

Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
 Until she be an athlete

bold,

And weary with a finger's touch

Those writhed limbs of lightning
 speed;

Like that strange angel
 which of old,

Until the breaking of the light,

Wrestled with wandering Israel,
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong

night,

And heaven's mazed signs stood
 still

In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE

I

THOU art not steep'd in golden
 languors,

No tranced summer calm is
 thine,

Ever varying Madeline.

Thro' light and shadow thou
 dost range,
 Sudden glances, sweet and
 strange,
 Delicious spites and darling angers,
 And airy forms of flitting change.

II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.
 Revelings deep and clear are
 thine
 Of wealthy smiles : but who may
 know
 Whether smile or frown be fleeter ?
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
 Who may know ?
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the
 brow
 Light-gloomings over eyes divine,
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are
 thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.
 Thy smile and frown are not
 aloof
 From one another,
 Each to each is dearest
 brother ;
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof
 Momently shot into each
 other.
 All the mystery is thine ;
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,
 Ever varying Madeline.

III

A subtle, sudden flame,
 By veering passion fann'd,
 About thee breaks and
 dances ;
 When I would kiss thy hand,
 The flush of anger'd shame
 O'erflows thy calmer glances
 And o'er black brows drops down
 A sudden-curved frown :
 But when I turn away,
 Thou, willing me to stay,
 Wooest not, nor vainly wran-
 glest ;
 But, looking fixedly the while,
 All my bounding heart entan-
 glest
 In a golden-netted smile ;

Then in madness and in bliss,
 If my lips should dare to kiss
 Thy taper fingers amorously,
 Again thou blushest angerly ;
 And o'er black brows drops
 down
 A sudden-curved frown.

THE MERMAN

I

Who would be
 A merman bold,
 Sitting alone,
 Singing alone
 Under the sea,
 With a crown of gold,
 On a throne ?

II

I would be a merman bold ;
 I would sit and sing the whole of
 the day ;
 I would fill the sea-halls with a
 voice of power ;
 But at night I would roam abroad
 and play
 With the mermaids in and out of
 the rocks,
 Dressing their hair with the white
 sea-flower ;
 And holding them back by their
 flowing locks
 I would kiss them often under the
 sea,
 And kiss them again till they
 kiss'd me
 Laughingly, laughingly ;
 And then we would wander away,
 away
 To the pale-green sea-groves
 straight and high,
 Chasing each other mer-
 rily.

III

There would be neither moon nor
 star ;
 But the wave would make music
 above us afar—
 Low thunder and light in the
 magic night—
 Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and
cry

All night, merrily, merrily;
They would pelt me with starry
spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their
hands between,

All night, merrily, merrily :
But I would throw to them back
in mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :
Then leaping out upon them un-
seen

I would kiss them often under the
sea,

And kiss them again till they
kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly.
Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean
green !

Soft are the moss-beds under the
sea ;

We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID

I

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne ?

II

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole
of the day ;
With a comb of pearl I would
comb my hair ;
And still as I comb'd I would sing
and say,
'Who is it loves me ? who loves
not me ?'

I would comb my hair till my
ringlets would fall,

Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud
crown

Low adown and around,

And I should look like a fountain
of gold

Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne

In the midst of the hall ;
Till that great sea-snake under
the sea

From his coiled sleeps in the
central deeps

Would slowly trail himself seven-
fold

Round the hall where I sate, and
look in at the gate

With his large calm eyes for the
love of me.

And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of
me.

III

But at night I would wander away,
away,

I would fling on each side my
low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne
and play

With the mermen in and out of
the rocks ;

We would run to and fro, and
hide and seek,

On the broad sea-wolds in the
crimson shells,

Whose silvery spikes are nighest
the sea.

But if any came near I would call,
and shriek,

And adown the steep like a wave
I would leap

From the diamond-ledges that
jut from the dells ;

For I would not be kiss'd by all
who would list,

Of the bold merry mermen under
the sea ;

They would sue me, and woo me,
and flatter me,

In the purple twilights under the
sea ;

But the king of them all would
carry me,

Woo me, and win me, and marry
me,

In the branching jaspers under
the sea;
Then all the dry pied things that
be
In the hueless mosses under the
sea
Would curl round my silver feet
silently,
All looking up for the love of me:
And if I should carol aloud, from
aloft
All things that are forked, and
horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow
sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of
me.

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS OF
A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE
MIND NOT IN UNITY
WITH ITSELF

OH God! my God! have mercy
now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt Thy
brow,
Wounding Thy soul.—That even
now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer
noon
While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger
grow!
Is not my human pride brought
low?
The boasting of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like
grown?
And what is left to me, but Thou,
And faith in Thee? Men pass me
by;
Christians with happy counten-
ances—
And children all seem full of Thee!

And women smile with saint-like
glances
Like Thine own mother's when
she bow'd
Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were
born.
Goodwill to me as well as all—
I one of them: my brothers
they:
Brothers in Christ—a world of
peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things
should cease,
And then one Heaven receive
us all.

How sweet to have a common
faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound
and eat
Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing
sweet!
A grief not uninformed, and dull,
Hearted with hope, of hope as full
As is the blood with life, or night
And a dark cloud with rich moon-
light.
To stand beside a grave, and see
The red small atoms wherewith we
Are built, and smile in calm, and
say—
'These little motes and grains
shall be
Clothed on with immortality
More glorious than the noon of
day.
All that is pass'd into the
flowers,
And into beasts, and other men,
And all the Norland whirl-
wind showers
From open vaults, and all the sea
O'erwashes with sharp salts,
again
Shall fleet together all, and be
Indued with immortality.'

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee !
Who lets his waxen fingers play
About his mother's neck, and
knows

Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and
day ;

They light his little life alway ;
He hath no thought of coming
woes ;

He hath no care of life or death,
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is ;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to
dwell,

Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make
visible

Her subtil, warm, and golden
breath,

Which mixing with the infant's
blood,

Fulfils him with beatitude.

Oh ! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with
brows

Propped on thy knees, my hands
upheld

In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest
prayer—

For me unworthy !—and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that
knew

The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining
through.

Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep ?
why dare

Paths in the desert ? Could not I

Bow myself down, where thou
hast knelt,
To the earth—until the ice would
melt

Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ;
What Devil had the heart to scath
Flowers thou hadst reared—to
brush the dew

From thine own lily, when thou
grave

Was deep, my mother, in the clay
Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself
Had I

So little love for thee ? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers

Why pray
To one who heeds not, who can
save

But will not ? Great in faith, and
strong

Against the grief of circumstances
Wert thou, and yet unheard

What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me
drive

Through utter dark a full-sail'd
skiff,

Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping
low

Unto the death, not sunk ! I know
At matins and at evensong,

That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers would'st
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is grey, and cold

At heart, thou wouldest murmur
still—

'Bring this lamb back into Thy
fold,

My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'
Would'st tell me I must brook the
rod,

And chastisement of human pride ;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood

Betwixt me and the light of God !
That hitherto I had defied,

And had rejected God—that grace
Would drop from his o'erbrim-

ming love,
As manna on my wilderness,

If I would pray—that God would
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and
thence,
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's
life. Alas!
I think that pride hath now no
place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not
yet
Anchorthy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask
the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope
waves
After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbased beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain
tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor
can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues
and paves
The other? I am too forlorn,
Tooshaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit
whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt
and fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my
strength,
When I went forth in quest of
truth,
'It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved
of change,
An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the
storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or
fills

The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furrow. In a
time,
Of which he wots not, run short
pains
Through his warm heart; and
then, from whence
He knows not, on his light there
falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and
climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed
eyes,
And something in the darkness
draws
His forehead earthward, and he
dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and
hope
As a young lamb, who cannot
dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
seem,
And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the
one,
If one there be?' Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but every-
where
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my
God,
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

Oh weary life! oh weary death!
Oh spirit and heart made desolate!
Oh damned vacillating state!

SONG—THE OWL

I

WHEN cats run home and light is
 come,
 And dew is cold upon the
 ground,
 And the far-off stream is dumb,
 And the whirring sail goes round,
 And the whirring sail goes
 round;
 Alone and warming his five
 wits,
 The white owl in the belfry
 sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the
 latch,
 And rarely smells the new-
 mown hay,
 And the cock hath sung beneath
 the thatch
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;
 Alone and warming his five
 wits,
 The white owl in the belfry
 sits.

SECOND SONG TO THE SAME
OWL

I

THY tuwhits are lull'd I wot,
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
 Which upon the dark afloat,
 So took echo with delight,
 So took echo with delight,
 That her voice untuneful
 grown,
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;
 But I cannot mimick it;
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 With a lengthen'd loud
 halloo,
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit,
 tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
 blew free
 In the silken sail of infancy,
 The tide of time flow'd back with
 me,
 The forward-flowing tide of
 time;
 And many a sheeny summer-
 morn,
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted
 gold,
 High-walled gardens green and
 old;
 True Mussulman was I and
 sworn,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
 The low and bloomed foliage,
 drove
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
 clove
 The citron-shadows in the blue:
 By garden porches on the brim,
 The costly doors flung open
 wide,
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight
 dim,
 And broider'd sofas on each side:
 In sooth it was a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd pla-
 tans guard
 The outlet, did I turn away
 The boat-head down a broad
 canal
 From the main river sluiced,
 where all
 The sloping of the moon-lit sward
 Was damask-work, and deep
 inlay
 Of braided blooms unmown, which
 crept
 Adown to where the water slept.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing
 on

My shallop thro' the star-strown
 calm,

Until another night in night
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
 clomb

Heavenward, were stay'd beneath
 the dome

Of hollow boughs.—A goodly
 time,

For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.
 From the green rivage many a fall
 Of diamond rillets musical,
 Thro' little crystal arches low
 Down from the central fountain's
 flow

Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to
 shake

The sparkling flints beneath the
 prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
 A walk with vary-colour'd shells
 Wander'd engrain'd. Oneitherside
 All round about the fragrant marge
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn
 In order, eastern flowers large,
 Some dropping low their crimson
 bells

Half-closed, and others studded
 wide

With disks and tiars, fed the
 time

With odour in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
 In closest coverture upsprung,
 The living airs of middle night
 Died round the bulbul as he sung;
 Not he: but something which
 possess'd

The darkness of the world, delight,

Life, anguish, death, immortal
 love,

Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
 Apart from place, withholding
 time,

But flattering the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
 Slumber'd: the solemn palms
 were ranged

Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
 A sudden splendour from behind
 Flush'd all the leaves with rich
 gold-green,

And, flowing rapidly between
 Their interspaces, counterchanged
 The level lake with diamond-plots
 Of dark and bright. A lovely
 time,

For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere over-
 head,

Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
 Grew darker from that under-
 flame:

So, leaping lightly from the boat,
 With silver anchor left afloat,
 In marvel whence that glory came
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,
 Entranced with that place and
 time,

So worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was
 drawn—

A realm of pleasance, many a
 mound,

And many a shadow-chequer'd
 lawn

Full of the city's stilly sound,
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
 round

The stately cedar, tamarisks,
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
 Graven with emblems of the
 time,

In honour of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
 From the long alley's latticed
 shade
 Emerged, I came upon the great
 Pavilion of the Caliphat.
 Right to the carven cedarn
 doors,
 Flung inward over spangled floors,
 Broad-based flights of marble
 stairs
 Ran up with golden balustrade,
 After the fashion of the time,
 And humour of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
 As with the quintessence of flame,
 A million tapers flaring bright
 From twisted silvers look'd to
 shame
 The hollow-vaulted dark, and
 stream'd
 Upon the mooned domes aloof
 In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
 Hundreds of crescents on the
 roof
 Of night new-risen, that marvel-
 lous time,
 To celebrate the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
 Tressed with redolent ebony,
 In many a dark delicious curl,
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued
 zone;
 The sweetest lady of the time,
 Well worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either
 side,
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich
 Throne of the massive ore, from
 which
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating
 fold,
 Engarlanded and diaper'd
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth
 of gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-
 stirr'd
 With merriment of kingly pride,
 Sole star of all that place and
 time,
 I saw him—in his golden prime,
 THE GOOD HAROUN AL-
 RASCHID !

ODE TO MEMORY

I

THOU who stealest fire,
 From the fountains of the past,
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,
 Visit my low desire !
 Strengthen me, enlighten me !
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II

Come not as thou camest of
 late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day; but robed in
 soften'd light
 Of orient state.
 Whilome thou camest with the
 morning mist,
 Even as a maid, whose stately
 brow
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn
 have kiss'd,
 When she, as thou,
 Stays on her floating locks the
 lovely freight
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
 shoots
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge
 of fruits,
 Which in wintertide shall star
 The black earth with brilliance
 rare.

III

Whilome thou camest with the
 morning mist,
 And with the evening cloud,
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into
 my open breast
 (Those peerless flowers which in
 the rudest wind
 Never grow sere,

When rooted in the garden of the
mind,
Because they are the earliest of
the year).

Nor was the night thy
shroud.

In sweet dreams softer than
unbroken rest

Thou ledest by the hand thine
infant Hope.

The eddying of her garments
caught from thee

The light of thy great presence;
and the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,

Though deep not fathomless,

Was cloven with the million stars
which tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless
infancy.

Small thought was there of life's
distress;

For sure she deem'd no mist of
earth could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen
and beautiful:

Sure she was nigher to heaven's
spheres,

Listening the lordly music flowing
from

The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV

Come forth I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the
myriad eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of
flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,

Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the
waterfall

Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the
wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt
the grey hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four

That stand beside my father's
door,

And chiefly from the brook that
loves

To purl o'er matted cress and
ribbed sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy
coves,

Drawing into his narrow earthen
urn,

In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough
woodland.

O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong
bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from
wattled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,

When the first matin-song hath
waken'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth for-
lorn,

What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a
low-hung cloud.

V

Large dowries doth the raptured
eye

To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led

With music and sweet
showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must
sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist
Memory,

In setting round thy first
experiment

With royal frame-work of
wrought gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy
first essay,

And foremost in thy various
gallery

Place it, where sweetest sunlight
falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased
thee,

That all which thou hast drawn
 of fairest
 Or boldest since, but lightly
 weigh's
 With thee unto the love thou
 bearest
 The first-born of thy genius.
 Artist-like,
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze
 On the prime labour of thine early
 days :
 No matter what the sketch might
 be ;
 Whether the high field on the
 bushless Pike,
 Or even a sand-built ridge
 Of heaped hills that mound the
 sea,
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,
 Or even a lowly cottage whence
 we see
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste
 enormous marsh,
 Where from the frequent bridge,
 Like emblems of infinity,
 The trenched waters run from sky
 to sky ;
 Or a garden bower'd close
 With plaited alleys of the trailing
 rose,
 Long alleys falling down to twi-
 light grots,
 Or opening upon level plots
 Of crowned lilies, standing near
 Purple-spiked lavender :
 Whither in after life retired
 From brawling storms,
 From weary wind,
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,
 We may hold converse with all
 forms
 Of the many-sided mind,
 And those whom passion hath not
 blinded,
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.
 My friend, with you to live
 alone,
 Were how much better than to
 own
 A crown, a sceptre, and a
 throne !
 O strengthen me, enlighten me !
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG

I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last
 hours
 Dwelling amid these yellowing
 bowers :
 To himself he talks ;
 For a eventide, listening earnestly,
 At his work you may hear him sob
 and sigh
 In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the
 heavy stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sun-
 flower
 Over its grave i' the earth
 so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and
 close,
 As a sick man's room when he
 taketh repose
 An hour before death ;
 My very heart faints and my whole
 soul grieves
 At the moist rich smell of the
 rotting leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box
 beneath,
 And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sun-
 flower
 Over its grave i' the earth
 so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

ADELINE

I

MYSTERY of mysteries,
 Faintly smiling Adeline,
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
 But beyond expression fair
 With thy floating flaxen
 hair ;

Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
 Take the heart from out my
 breast.
 Wherefore those dim looks of
 thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
 Like a lily which the sun
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,
 And a rose-bush leans upon,
 Thou that faintly smilest still,
 As a Naiad in a well,
 Looking at the set of day,
 Or a phantom two hours old
 Of a maiden past away,
 Ere the placid lips be cold ?
 Wherefore those faint smiles of
 thine,
 Spiritual Adeline ?

III

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
 For sure thou art not all alone :
 Do beating hearts of salient
 springs
 Keep measure with thine own ?
 Hast thou heard the butter-
 flies
 What they say betwixt their
 wings ?
 Or in stillest evenings
 With what voice the violet woos
 To his heart the silver dews ?
 Or when little airs arise,
 How the merry bluebell rings
 To the mosses underneath ?
 Hast thou look'd upon the
 breath
 Of the lilies at sunrise ?
 Wherefore that faint smile of
 thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy
 mind,
 Some spirit of a crimson rose
 In love with thee forgets to close
 His curtains, wasting odorous
 sighs
 All night long on darkness blind.

What aileth thee ? whom waitest
 thou
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
 And those dew-lit eyes of
 thine,
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

V

Lovest thou the doleful wind
 When thou gazest at the skies ?
 Doth the low-tongued Orient
 Wander from the side of the
 morn,
 Dripping with Sabæan spice
 On thy pillow, lowly bent
 With melodious airs lovelorn,
 Breathing Light against thy
 face,
 While his locks a-dropping twined
 Round thy neck in subtle ring
 Make a carcanet of rays,
 And ye talk together still,
 In the language wherewith
 Spring
 Letters cowslips on the hill ?
 Hence that look and smile of
 thine,
 Spiritual Adeline.

A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, 'The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of
 things.'

Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd
 his hair,
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
 More purely, when they wish to
 charm

Pallas and Juno sitting by :
 And with a sweeping of the arm,
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
 He canvass'd human mysteries,
 And trod on silk, as if the winds
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,
 And stood aloof from other
 minds
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were
 meek,
 Himself unto himself he sold :
 Upon himself himself did feed :
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
 And other than his form of
 creed,
 With chisell'd features clear and
 sleek.

THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was
 born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
 scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'
 good and ill,
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet
 he threaded
 The secretest walks of fame :
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts
 were headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his
 silver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they
 sung,
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds
 which bore
 Them earthward till they lit ;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the
 field flower,
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing
 forth anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,
 Like to the mother plant in sem-
 blance, grew
 A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad
 to fling
 The winged shafts of truth,
 To throng with stately blooms the
 breathing spring
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs
 with beams,
 Tho' one did fling the fire.
 Heaven flow'd upon the soul in
 many dreams
 Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on
 truth, the world
 Like one great garden show'd,
 And thro' the wreaths of floating
 dark upcurl'd,
 Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august
 sunrise
 Her beautiful bold brow,
 When rites and forms before his
 burning eyes
 Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her
 maiden robes
 Sunn'd by those orient skies ;
 But round about the circles of the
 globes
 Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was
 traced in flame
 WISDOM, a name to shake
 All evil dreams of power—a sacred
 name.
 And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as
 they ran,
 And as the lightning to the
 thunder
 Which follows it, riving the spirit
 of man.
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
 No sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and
 with *his* word
 She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND

I

VEX not thou the poet's mind
 With thy shallow wit :
 Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
 For thou canst not fathom it.
 Clear and bright it should be
 ever,
 Flowing like a crystal river ;
 Bright as light, and clear as
 wind.

II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not
 anear ;
 All the place is holy ground ;
 Hollow smile and frozen sneer
 Come not here.
 Holy water will I pour
 Into every spicy flower
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it
 around.
 The flowers would faint at your
 cruel cheer.
 In your eye there is death,
 There is frost in your breath
 Which would blight the plants.
 Where you stand you cannot
 hear
 From the groves within
 The wild-bird's din.
 In the heart of the garden the
 merry bird chants,
 It would fall to the ground if you
 came in.
 In the middle leaps a fountain
 Like sheet lightning,
 Ever brightening
 With a low melodious thunder ;
 All day and all night it is ever
 drawn
 From the brain of the purple
 mountain
 Which stands in the distance
 yonder :

It springs on a level of bowery
 lawn,
 And the mountain draws it from
 Heaven above,
 And it sings a song of undying
 love ;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear
 and full,
 You never would hear it ; your
 ears are so dull ;
 So keep where you are : you are
 foul with sin ;
 It would shrink to the earth if you
 came in.

NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be weary
 of flowing
 Under my eye ?
 When will the wind be weary of
 blowing
 Over the sky ?
 When will the clouds be weary of
 fleeting ?
 When will the heart be weary of
 beating ?
 And nature die ?
 Never, oh ! never, nothing will
 die ;
 The stream flows,
 The wind blows,
 The cloud fleets,
 The heart beats,
 Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;
 All things will change
 Through eternity.
 'Tis the world's winter ;
 Autumn and summer
 Are gone long ago.
 Earth is dry to the centre,
 But spring a new comer—
 A spring rich and strange,
 Shall make the winds blow
 Round and round,
 Through and through,
 Here and there,
 Till the air
 And the ground
 Shall be filled with life
 anew.

The world was never made;
It will change, but it will not
fade.

So let the wind range;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Through eternity.

Nothing was born;
Nothing will die;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in
its flowing

Under my eye;
Warmly and broadly the south
winds are blowing
Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds
are fleeing;

Every heart this May morning in
joyance is beating

Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;
For all things must die.

All things must die.
Spring will come never more.

Oh! vanity!

Death waits at the door.
See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merry making.
We are called—we must go.

Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh! misery!

Hark! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing;
Ice with the warm blood mixing;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell:
Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know
Long ago.

And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the
shore;

For even and morn
Ye will never see
Through eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

THE DYING SWAN

I

THE plain was grassy, wild and
bare,

Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful grey.

With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.

It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as
it went.

II

Some blue peaks in the distance
rose,

And white against the cold-white
sky,

Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind
did sigh;

Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green
and still

The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green,
and yellow.

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took
the soul

Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear;

And floating about the under-
sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coro-
nach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes
anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and mani-
fold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and
bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals,
and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim
is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city
afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.
And the creeping mosses and
clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,
And the wavy swell of the souging
reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the
echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers
that throng
The desolate creeks and pools
among,
Were flooded over with eddying
song.

A DIRGE

I

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy
rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy
grave.

Let them rave.

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy
grave.

Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy
bed ;

Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy
grave.

Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglare
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's
tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached
deep,

Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy
grave.

Let them rave.

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there ;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused :

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

THE DESERTED HOUSE

I

LIFE and Thought have gone
away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows
wide :
Careless tenants they !

II

All within is dark as night :
In the windows is no light ;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

III

Close the door, the shutters
close,
Or thro' the windows we
shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV

Come away : no more mirth
Is here or merry-making
sound.
The house was builded of the
earth,
And shall fall again to
ground.

V

Come away : for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have
bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have
stayed with us !

LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of
Paradise,
And all about him roll'd his
lustrous eyes ;
When, turning round a cassia,
full in view

Death, walking all alone beneath
a yew,
And talking to himself, first met
his sight :
'You must begone,' said Death,
'these walks are mine.'
Love wept and spread his sheeny
vans for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour
is thine :
Thou art the shadow of life, and
as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all
beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of
death ;
The shadow passeth when the
tree shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper
deep ;
Far far beneath in the abysmal
sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded
sleep
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest
sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides : above
him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth
and height ;
And far away into the sickly
light,
From many a wondrous grot and
secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant fins the slum-
bering green.
There hath he lain for ages and
will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms
in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the
deep ;
Then once by men and angels to
be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the
surface die.

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my
 woe,
 Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,
 Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are
 ribb'd with snow,
 And loud the Norland whirlwinds
 blow,

Oriana,
 Alone I wander to and fro,
 Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was grow-
 ing,
 Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crow-
 ing,
 Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flow-
 ing,

We heard the steeds to battle
 going,
 Oriana ;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
 Oriana.

In the yew - wood black as
 night,

Oriana,
 Ere I rode into the fight,
 Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my
 sight

By star-shine and by moonlight,
 Oriana,

I to thee my troth did plight,
 Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
 Oriana :

She watch'd my crest among them
 all,

Oriana :
 She saw me fight, she heard me
 call

When forth there stept a foeman
 tall,

Oriana,
 Atween me and the castle wall,
 Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,

Oriana :
 The false, false arrow went aside,
 Oriana :

The damned arrow glanced aside,
 And pierced thy heart, my love,
 my bride,

Oriana !
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my
 bride,
 Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the
 space,
 Oriana.

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's
 brays,
 Oriana.

Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt
 apace,

The battle deepen'd in its place,
 Oriana ;

But I was down upon my face,
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me
 where I lay,

Oriana !
 How could I rise and come
 away,
 Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?
 They should have stabb'd me
 where I lay,

Oriana—
 They should have trod me into
 clay,
 Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not
 break,
 Oriana !

O pale, pale face so sweet and
 meek,
 Oriana !

Thou smilest, but thou dost not
 speak,

And then the tears run down my
 cheek,

Oriana :
 What wantest thou ? whom dost
 thou seek,
 Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
 Oriana.
 Thou comest atween me and the
 skies,
 Oriana.
 I feel the tears of blood arise
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,
 Oriana.
 Within thy heart my arrow lies,
 Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
 Oriana !
 O happy thou that liest low,
 Oriana !
 All night the silence seems to flow
 Beside me in my utter woe,
 Oriana !
 A weary, weary way I go,
 Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down
 the sea,
 Oriana,
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,
 Oriana.
 Thou liest beneath the greenwood
 tree,
 I dare not die and come to thee,
 Oriana.
 I hear the roaring of the sea,
 Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour
 villages
 Playing mad pranks along the
 heathy leas;
 Two strangers meeting at a
 festival;
 Two lovers whispering by an
 orchard wall;
 Two lives bound fast in one with
 golden ease;
 Two graves grass-green beside a
 grey church-tower,
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy-
 blossomed;
 Two children in one hamlet born
 and bred;
 So runs the round of life from hour
 to hour.

WE ARE FREE

THE winds, as at their hour of
 birth,
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,
 Breathed low around the rolling
 earth
 With mellow preludes, 'We are
 free.'
 The streams through many a
 lily row
 Down-carolling to the crisped
 sea,
 Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
 Atween the blossoms, 'We are
 free.'

THE SEA-FAIRIES

Slow sail'd the weary mariners
 and saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the
 running foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and
 bosoms prest
 To little harps of gold ; and while
 they mused,
 Whispering to each other half in
 fear,
 Shrill music reach'd them on the
 middle sea.

Whither away, whither away,
 whither away ? fly no more.
 Whither away from the high
 green field, and the happy
 blossoming shore ?
 Day and night to the billow the
 fountain calls;
 Down shower the gambolling
 waterfalls
 From wandering over the lea :
 Out of the live-green heart of the
 dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson
 shells,
 And thick with white bells the
 clover-hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea :
 O hither, come hither and furl
 your sails,
 Come hither to me and to me :
 Hither, come hither and frolic and
 play ;

Here it is only the mew that
wails;
We will sing to you all the
day:
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and
dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the
gales,
And the spangle dances in bight
and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies
on the land
Over the islands free;
And the rainbow lives in the curve
of the sand;
Hither, come hither and see;
And the rainbow hangs on the
poising wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove
and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome
be:
O hither, come hither, and be our
lords,
For merry brides are we:
We will kiss sweet kisses, and
speak sweet words:
O listen, listen, your eyes shall
glisten
With pleasure and love and
jubilee:
O listen, listen, your eyes shall
glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the
golden chords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a
shore
All the world o'er, all the world
o'er?
Whither away? listen and stay:
mariner, mariner, fly no
more.

SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—
thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-
priest
To scare church-harpies from the
master's feast;

Our dusted velvets have much
need of thee:
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of
old saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd
homily;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest
energy
To embattail and to wall about thy
cause
With iron-worded proof, hating
to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit
drone
Half God's good sabbath, while
the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou
fount from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into
the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand
and mark.

SONNET

MINE be the strength of spirit,
fierce and free,
Like some broad river rushing
down alone,
With the selfsame impulse where-
with he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the
echoing lea:—
Which with increasing might doth
forward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and
cape, and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt
sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for
many a mile.
Mine be the power which ever to
its sway
Will win the wise at once, and by
degrees
May into uncongenial spirits
flow;
Even as the great gulf stream of
Florida
Floats far away into the Northern
seas
The lavish growths of southern
Mexico.

TO —

I

ALL good things have not kept
aloof,

Nor wander'd into other ways :
I have not lack'd thy mild re-
proof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise,
But life is full of weary days.

II

Shake hands, my friend, across
the brink

Of that deep grave to which I go :
Shake hands once more : I cannot
sink

So far—far down, but I shall
know

Thy voice, and answer from
below.

III

When in the darkness over me,
The four-handed mole shall
scrape,

Plant thou no dusky cypress tree,
Nor wreathe thy cap with dole-
ful crape,
But pledge me in the flowing
grape.

IV

And when the sappy field and
wood

Grow green beneath the showery
gray,

And rugged barks begin to bud,
And through damp holts, new-
flush'd with May,
Ring sudden laughter of the
Jay;

V

Then let wise Nature work her
will,

And on my clay her darnels
grow.

Come only, when the days are
still,

And at my headstone whisper
low,

And tell me if the woodbines
blow.

VI

If thou art blest, my mother's
smile

Undimmed, if bees are on the
wing :

Then cease, my friend, a little
while,

That I may hear the throstle
sing

His bridal song, the boast of
spring.

VII

Sweet as the noise in parchèd
plains

Of bubbling wells that fret the
stones,

(If any sense in me remains)

Thy words will be ; thy cheerful
tones

As welcome to my crumbling
bones.

BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn
hearts of oak,

Madman !—to chain with chains,
and bind with bands

That island queen that sways the
floods and lands

From Ind to Ind, but in fair
daylight woke,

When from her wooden walls, lit
by sure hands,

With thunders, and with light-
nings, and with smoke,

Peal after peal, the British battle
broke,

Lulling the brine against the
Coptic sands.

We taught him lowlier moods,
when Elsinore

Heard the war moan along the
distant sea,

Rocking with shatter'd spars,
with sudden fires

Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet
once more

We taught him : late he learned
humility

Perforce, like those whom Gideon
school'd with briars.

SONNET

BUT were I loved, as I desire to
be,
What is there in the great sphere
of the earth,
And range of evil between death
and birth,
That I should fear,—if I were
loved by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world
of pain
Clear Love would pierce and
cleave, if thou wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere
in the main,
Fresh-water springs come up
through bitter brine.
'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand-
in-hand with thee,
To wait for death—mute—careless
of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the
surge
Of some new deluge from a thou-
sand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam
into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could
see.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet
the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs
by

To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for
ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray
towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her
hand?
Or at the casement seen her
stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper
weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

THERE she weaves by night and
day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may
be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the
year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market
girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels
 glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson
 clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
 And sometimes thro' the mirror
 blue
 The knights come riding two and
 two:
 She hath no loyal knight and
 true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic
 sights,
 For often thro' the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights,
 And music, went to Camelot:
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately
 wed;
 'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-
 sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling thro' the
 leaves,
 And flamed upon the brazen
 greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
 A red-cross knight for ever
 kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
 Like to some branch of stars we
 see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot:
 And from his blazon'd baldric
 slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armour rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-
 leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn'd like one burning flame
 together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing
 light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight
 glow'd;
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse
 trode;
 From underneath his helmet
 flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he
 rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the
 river
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces thro' the
 room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror crack'd from side to
 side;
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were
 waning,
 The broad stream in his banks
 complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot;
 Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,
 And round about the prow she
 wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down
she lay;
The broad stream bore her far
away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last
song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and
dame,
And round the prow they read
her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for
fear,
All the knights at Camelot :
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level
shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright,
But 'Ave Mary,' madeshemoan,
And 'Ave Mary,' night and
morn,
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love
forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly
down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest
brown
To left and right, and made appear,
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
'Madonna, sad is night and
morn ;'
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love
forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and
past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she :
Complaining, 'Mother, give me
grace
To help me of my weary load.'
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
'Is this the form,' she made
her moan,
'That won his praises night
and morn ?'
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I
wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake
forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb
 would bleat,
 Nor any cloud would cross the
 vault,
 But day increased from heat to
 heat,
 On stony drought and steaming
 salt;
 Till now at noon she slept
 again,
 And seem'd knee-deep in moun-
 tain grass,
 And heard her native breezes
 pass,

And runlets babbling down the glen.
 She breathed in sleep a lower
 moan,
 And murmuring, as at
 night and morn,
 She thought, 'My spirit is
 here alone,
 Walks forgotten, and is
 forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a
 dream:

She felt he was and was not
 there.

She woke: the babble of the
 stream

Fell, and, without, the steady
 glare

Shrank one sick willow sere and
 small.

The river-bed was dusty-white;
 And all the furnace of the light
 Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd with a stifled
 moan

More inward than at night
 or morn,

'Sweet Mother, let me not
 here alone

Live forgotten and die
 forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom
 drew

Old letters, breathing of her
 worth,

For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs
 be true,

To what is loveliest upon
 earth.'

An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look at her with slight, and
 say,

'But now thy beauty flows
 away,

So be alone for evermore.'

'O cruel heart,' she changed
 her tone,

'And cruel love, whose end
 is scorn,

Is this the end to be left alone,
 To live forgotten, and die
 forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
 An image seem'd to pass the
 door,

To look into her eyes and say,

'But thou shalt be alone no
 more.'

And flaming downward over all
 From heat to heat the day
 decreased,

And slowly rounded to the east
 The one black shadow from the wall.

'The day to night,' she made
 her moan,

The day to night, the night
 to morn,

And day and night I am left
 alone

To live forgotten, and love
 forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,

There came a sound as of the
 sea;

Backward the lattice-blind she
 flung,

And lean'd upon the balcony.

There all in spaces rosy-bright

Large Hesper glitter'd on her
 tears,

And deepening thro' the silent
 spheres,

Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made
 her moan,

'The night comes on that
 knows not morn,

When I shall cease to be all
 alone,

To live forgotten, and love
 forlorn.'

ELEÄNORE

I

THY dark eyes open'd not,
 Nor first reveal'd themselves to
 English air,
 For there is nothing here,
 Which, from the outward to the
 inward brought,
 Moulded thy baby thought.
 Far off from human neighbour-
 hood,
 Thou wert born, on a summer
 morn,
 A mile beneath the cedar-
 wood.
 Thy bounteous forehead was not
 fann'd
 With breezes from our oaken
 glades,
 But thou wert nursed in some
 delicious land
 Of lavish lights, and floating
 shades:
 And flattering thy childish
 thought
 The oriental fairy brought,
 At the moment of thy
 birth,
 From old well-heads of haunted
 rills,
 And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny
 shore,
 The choicest wealth of all
 the earth,
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II

Or the yellow-banded bees,
 Thro' half-open lattices
 Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy
 gardens cull'd—
 A glorious child, dreaming
 alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding
 down,
 With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber
 lull'd.

III

Who may minister to thee?
 Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-
 rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower
 Grape-thicken'd from the light,
 and blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the
 Even,
 All along the shadowing
 shore,
 Crimsons over an inland mere,
 Eleänore!

IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,
 How may measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore?
 The luxuriant symmetry
 Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore?
 Every turn and glance of
 thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
 And the steady sunset glow,
 That stays upon thee? For
 in thee
 Is nothing sudden,
 nothing single;
 Like two streams of incense
 free
 From one censer, in
 one shrine,
 Thought and motion
 mingle,
 Mingle ever. Motions flow
 To one another, even as tho'
 They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a
 sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-
 deep;
 Whom may express thee, Eleänore?

V

I stand before thee, Eleänore;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore!

VI

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought,
 smiling asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, over-
 power'd quite,
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light:
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,
 Should slowly round his orb, and
 slowly grow
 To a full face, there like a sun
 remain
 Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it
 was before;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come
 and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial
 Eleänore.

VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on
 high,
 Roof'd the world with doubt
 and fear,
 Floating thro' an evening atmo-
 sphere,
 Grow golden all about thy sky;

In thee all passion becomes pas-
 sionless,
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellow-
 ness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,
 Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation:
 As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at
 will:
 Or sometimes they swell and
 move,
 Pressing up against the land,
 With motions of the outer
 sea:
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and
 sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid
 Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his
 hand
 Droops both his wings, regard-
 ing thee,
 And so would languish ever-
 more,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII

But when I see thee roam, with
 tresses unconfined,
 While the amorous, odorous
 wind
 Breathes low between the sunset
 and the moon;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,
 On silken cushions half re-
 clined;
 I watch thy grace; and in
 its place
 My heart a charmed slumber
 keeps,
 While I muse upon thy
 face;
 And a languid fire creeps
 Thro' my veins to all my
 frame,
 Dissolvingly and slowly: soon
 From thy rose-red lips MY
 name

Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears
are rife,

My tremulous tongue fal-
tereth,

I lose my colour, I lose my
breath,

I drink the cup of a costly
death,

Brimm'd with delirious draughts
of warmest life.

I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear

from thee;

Yet tell my name again
to me,

I would be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could
forget

The busy wrinkles round his
eyes?

The slow wise smile that, round
about

His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-with-
out,

And full of dealings with the
world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old
silver cup—

I see his grey eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—grey eyes lit up

With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so

glad,

So healthy, sound, and clear and
whole,

His memory scarce can make
me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world
amiss

Shall be unriddled by and by.

There's somewhat flows to us in
life,

But more is taken quite away.

Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same
day.

Have I not found a happy earth?

I least should breathe a thought
of pain.

Would God renew me from my
birth

I'd almost live my life again.

So sweet it seems with thee to
walk,

And once again to woo thee
mine—

It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the
wine—

To be the long and listless boy

Late-left an orphan of the
squire,

Where this old mansion mounted
high

Looks down upon the village
spire:

For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so

long,

Each morn my sleep was broken
thro'

By some wild skylark's matin
song.

And oft I heard the tender dove

In firry woodlands making moan;

But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.

For scarce my life with fancy
play'd

Before I dream'd that pleasant
dream—

Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the

stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear

The milldam rushing down with
noise,

And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and

poise,

The tall flag-flowers when they
 sprung
 Below the range of stepping-
 stones,
 Or those three chestnuts near, that
 hung
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When after roving in the woods
 ('Twas April then), I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their
 buds

Were glistening to the breezy blue;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
 An echo from a measured
 strain,
 Beat time to nothing in my head
 From some odd corner of the
 brain.

It haunted me, the morning long,
 With weary sameness in the
 rhymes,

The phantom of a silent song,
 That went and came a thousand
 times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
 I watch'd the little circles die;
 They past into the level flood,
 And there a vision caught my
 eye;

The reflex of a beauteous form,
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm
 Within the dark and dimpled
 beck.

For you remember, you had set,
 That morning, on the case-
 ment's edge

A long green box of mignonette,
 And you were leaning from the
 ledge:

And when I raised my eyes, above
 They met with two so full and
 bright—

Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
 That these have never lost their
 light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
 That I should die an early
 death:

For love possess'd the atmosphere,
 And fill'd the breast with purer
 breath.

My mother thought, What ails the
 boy?

For I was alter'd, and began
 To move about the house with
 joy,
 And with the certain step of
 man.

I loved the brimming wave that
 swam

Thro' quiet meadows round the
 mill,

The sleepy pool above the dam,
 The pool beneath it never still,
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd
 floor,

The dark round of the dripping
 wheel,

The very air about the door
 Made misty with the floating
 meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold
 When April nights began to
 blow,

And April's crescent glimmer'd
 cold,

I saw the village lights below;
 I knew your taper far away,
 And full at heart of trembling
 hope,

From off the wold I came, and
 lay

Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath
 the mill;

And 'by that lamp,' I thought,
 'she sits!'

The white chalk-quarry from the
 hill

Gleam'd to the flying moon by
 fits.

'O that I were beside her now!

O will she answer if I call?

O would she give me vow for
 vow,

Sweet Alice, if I told her all?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing
within;

Sometimes your shadow cross'd
the blind.

At last you rose and moved the
light,

And the long shadow of the
chair

Flitted across into the night,

And all the casement darken'd
there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white
with may,

Your ripe lips moved not, but
your cheek

Flush'd like the coming of the
day;

And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not,
little one!

Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother
brought

To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she
thought

I might have look'd a little
higher;

And I was young—too young to
wed:

'Yet must I love her for your
sake;

Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my
bride:

But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you
tried,

Too fearful that you should not
please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but
well;

And dews, that would have fall'n
in tears,

I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would
not see;

She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your
face,

As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart
to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song

I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may
seem,

As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the
stream,

While those full chestnuts whis-
per by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist.
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love
spells—

True love interprets — right
alone.

His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His
early rage

Had force to make me rhyme in
youth,
And makes me talk too much
in age.

And now those vivid hours are
gone,
Like mine own life to me thou
art,
Where Past and Present, wound
in one,
Do make a garland for the
heart :
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy
lot,
The day, when in the chestnut
shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget ?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love ? for we forget :
Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine.
True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms
entwine ;
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with
thine !
Untouch'd with any shade of
years,
May those kind eyes for ever
dwell !
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew
them well.
Yet tears they shed : they had
their part
Of sorrow : for when time was
ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing
type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown be-
fore ;
Although the loss that brought us
pain,
That loss but made us love the
more,

With farther lookings on. The
kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in
thee :
But that God bless thee, dear—
who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or
thought,
With blessings which no words
can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the
wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and
north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement
glass,
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded
grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O wither-
ing might !
O sun, that from thy noonday
height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and
light,
Lo, falling from my constant
mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf
and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring
wind.
Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the
showers :
I roll'd among the tender flowers :
I crush'd them on my breast,
my mouth :
I look'd athwart the burning
drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke
 his name,
 From my swift blood that went
 and came
 A thousand little shafts of flame
 Were shiver'd in my narrow
 frame.
 O Love, O fire ! once he drew
 With one long kiss my whole
 soul thro'
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh
 dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I
 know
 He cometh quickly : from below
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,
 blow
 Before him, striking on my
 brow.
 In my dry brain my spirit
 soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to
 swoon,
 Faints like a dazzled morning
 moon.

The wind sounds like a silver
 wire,
 And from beyond the noon a
 fire
 Is pour'd upon the hills, and
 nigher
 The skies stoop down in their
 desire ;
 And, isled in sudden seas of
 light,
 My heart, pierced thro' with
 fierce delight,
 Bursts into blossom in his
 sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
 All naked in a sultry sky,
 Droops blinded with his shining
 eye :

I will possess him or will die.
 I will grow round him in his
 place,
 Grow, live, die looking on his
 face,
 Die, dying clasp'd in his em-
 brace.

CENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian
 hills.

The swimming vapour slopes
 athwart the glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from
 pine to pine,

And loiters, slowly drawn. On
 either hand

The lawns and meadow-ledges
 midway down

Hang rich in flowers, and far
 below them roars

The long brook falling thro' the
 clov'n ravine

In cataract after cataract to the
 sea.

Behind the valley topmost Gar-
 garus

Stands up and takes the morning :
 but in front

The gorges, opening wide apart,
 reveal

Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon

Mournful Cenone, wandering for-
 lorn

Of Paris, once her playmate on
 the hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and
 round her neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float
 in rest.

She, leaning on a fragment twined
 with vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the moun-
 tain-shade

Sloped downward to her seat from
 the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
 Ida,

Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I
 die.

For now the noonday quiet holds
 the hill :

The grasshopper is silent in the
 grass :

The lizard, with his shadow on the
 stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the cicala
sleeps.

The purple flowers droop: the
golden bee

Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart
of love,

My heart is breaking, and my eyes
are dim,

And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,

Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills,

O Caves

That house the cold crown'd
snake! O mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and

build up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder
walls

Rose slowly to a music slowly
breathed,

A cloud that gather'd shape: for
it may be

That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its

deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,

Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning

hills,

Aloft the mountain lawn was
dewy-dark,

And dewy-dark aloft the moun-
tain pine:

Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-

horn'd, white-hooved,

Came up from reedy Simois all
alone.

'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from

the cleft:

Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With

down-dropt eyes

I sat alone: white-breasted like
a star

Fronting the dawn he moved; a
leopard skin

Droop'd from his shoulder, but
his sunny hair

Cluster'd about his temples like a
God's;

And his cheek brighten'd as the
foam-bow brightens

When the wind blows the foam,
and all my heart

Went forth to embrace him coming
ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere
I die.

He smiled, and opening out his
milk-white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
gold,

That smelt ambrosially, and while
I look'd

And listen'd, the full-flowing river
of speech

Came down upon my heart.

"My own Cenone,
Beautiful-brow'd Cenone, my own
soul,

Behold this fruit, whose gleaming
rind ingrav'n

'For the most fair,' would seem to
award it thine,

As lovelier than whatever Oread
haunt

The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all
grace

Of movement, and the charm of
married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere
I die.

He prest the blossom of his lips to
mine,

And added "This was cast upon
the board,

When all the full-faced presence
of the Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus;
whereupon

Rose feud, with question unto
whom 'twere due:

But light-foot Iris brought it
yester-eve,

Delivering, that to me, by com-
mon voice

Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnight: one silvery cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule

Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
 Wherewith to embellish state,
 "from many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
 Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.
 Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
 "Which in all action is the end of all;
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood

Somewhat apart, her clear and
 bared limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-
 headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning
 cold,
 The while, above, her full and
 earnest eye
 Over her snow-cold breast and
 angry cheek
 Kept watch, waiting decision,
 made reply.

"Self - reverence, self - know-
 ledge, self-control,
 These three alone lead life to
 sovereign power.
 Yet not for power (power of
 herself
 Would come uncall'd for), but to
 live by law,
 Acting the law we live by without
 fear;
 And, because right is right, to
 follow right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of
 consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere
 I die.
 Again she said: "I woo thee not
 with gifts.
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter
 me
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what
 I am,

So shalt thou find me fairest.
 Yet, indeed,
 If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge
 of fair,
 Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest
 thee sure
 That I shall love thee well and
 cleave to thee,
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy
 blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like
 a God's,
 To push thee forward thro' a life
 of shocks,

Dangers, and deeds, until endur-
 ance grow
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-
 grown will,
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure
 law,
 Commensure perfect freedom."

Here she ceased,
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried,
 "O Paris,
 Give it to Pallas!" but he heard
 me not,
 Or hearing would not hear me,
 woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
 Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I
 die.
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in
 Paphian wells,
 With rosy slender fingers back-
 ward drew
 From her warm brows and bosom
 her deep hair
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid
 throat
 And shoulder: from the violets
 her light foot
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her
 rounded form
 Between the shadows of the vine-
 bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as
 she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere
 I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild
 eyes,
 The herald of her triumph, draw-
 ing nigh
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I
 promise thee
 The fairest and most loving wife
 in Greece,"
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my
 sight for fear:
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised
 his arm,
 And I beheld great Herè's angry
 eyes,

As she withdrew into the golden
cloud,
And I was left alone within the
bower;
And from that time to this I am
alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

‘Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere
I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I
not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand
times.
Methinks I must be fair, for
yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton
pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with
playful tail
Crouch’d fawning in the weed.
Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd,
that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my
hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-
falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn
rains
Flash in the pools of whirling
Simois.

‘O mother, hear me yet before
I die.
They came, they cut away my
tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed
the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all
between
The snowy peak and snow-white
cataract
Foster’d the callow eaglet—from
beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in
the dark morn
The panther’s roar came muffled,
while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never
more
Shall lone Cenone see the morning
mist

Sweep thro’ them; never see them
overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of
silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the
trembling stars.

‘O mother, hear me yet before
I die.
I wish that somewhere in the
ruin’d folds,
Among the fragments tumbled
from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet
with her,
The Abominable, that uninvited
came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the
board,
And bred this change; that I
might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much
I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods
and men.

‘O mother, hear me yet before
I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thou-
sand times,
In this green valley, under this
green hill,
Ev’n on this hand, and sitting on
this stone?
Seal’d it with kisses? water’d it
with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to
these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou
see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou
bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-
floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this
earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love
to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light
of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I
may die.

Thou weighest heavy on the heart
 within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let
 me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before
 I die.
 I will not die alone, for fiery
 thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me,
 more and more,
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I
 hear
 Dead sounds at night come from
 the inmost hills,
 Like footsteps upon wool. I
 dimly see
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a
 mother
 Conjectures of the features of her
 child
 Ere it is born : her child !—a
 shudder comes
 Across me : never child be born of
 me,
 Unblest, to vex me with his
 father's eyes !

'O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die
 alone,
 Lest their shrill happy laughter
 come to me
 Walking the cold and starless road
 of Death
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient
 love
 With the Greek woman. I will
 rise and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars
 come forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for
 she says
 A fire dances before her, and a
 sound
 Rings ever in her ears of armed
 men.
 What this may be I know not, but
 I know
 That, wheresoe'er I am by night
 and day,
 All earth and air seem only burn-
 ing fire.'

THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one
 race :

She was the fairest in the face :
 The wind is blowing in turret
 and tree.

They were together, and she fell ;
 Therefore revenge became me
 well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning
 flame :

She mix'd her ancient blood with
 shame.

The wind is howling in turret
 and tree.

Whole weeks and months, and
 early and late,

To win his love I lay in wait :
 O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him
 come ;

I won his love, I brought him
 home.

The wind is roaring in turret and
 tree.

And after supper, on a bed,
 Upon my lap he laid his head :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :
 His ruddy cheek upon my
 breast.

The wind is raging in turret and
 tree.

I hated him with the hate of
 hell,

But I loved his beauty passing
 well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :
 I made my dagger sharp and
 bright.

The wind is raving in turret and
 tree.

As half-asleep his breath he
 drew,

Three times I stabb'd him thro'
 and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely
head,
He look'd so grand when he was
dead.

The wind is blowing in turret
and tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's
feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO ———

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of al-
legory,

(For you will understand it) of a
soul,

A sinful soul possess'd of many
gifts,

A spacious garden full of flowering
weeds,

A glorious Devil, large in heart
and brain,

That did love Beauty only,
(Beauty seen

In all varieties of mould and
mind)

And Knowledge for its beauty ; or
if Good,

Good only for its beauty, seeing
not

That Beauty, Good, and Know-
ledge, are three sisters

That doat upon each other, friends
to man,

Living together under the same
roof,

And never can be sunder'd with-
out tears.

And he that shuts Love out, in
turn shall be

Shut out from Love, and on her
threshold lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not
for this

Was common clay ta'en from the
common earth,

Moulded by God, and temper'd
with the tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of
man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-
house,

Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, 'O Soul, make merry and
carouse,

Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as
burnish'd brass,

I chose. The ranged ramparts
bright

From level meadow-bases of deep
grass

Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge
or shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding
stair.

My soul would live alone unto
herself

In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round
and round,' I said,

'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his

steadfast shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer
readily :

'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built

for me,

So royal-rich and wide.'

.

Four courts I made, East, West
and South and North,

In each a squared lawn, where-
from

The golden gorge of dragons
spouted forth

A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts
there ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like
mighty woods,

Echoing all night to that sonorous
flow

Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded
gallery
That lent broad verge to distant
lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to
where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents
in one swell
Across the mountain stream'd
below
In misty folds, that floating as
they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue
seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour
steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who
shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver
in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and
never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted
higher,
The light aërial gallery, golden-
rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows,
stain'd and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crim-
son fires
From shadow'd grots of arches
interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

.

Full of long-sounding corridors it
was,
That over-vaulted grateful
gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my
soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the
palace stood,
All various, each a perfect
whole
From living Nature, fit for every
mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras
green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted
hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a
tract of sand,
And some one pacing there
alone,
Who paced for ever in a glim-
mering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and
angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb
and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under
bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding
slow
By herds upon an endless
plain,
The ragged rims of thunder
brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their
sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves.
Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal
in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with
stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and
higher
All barr'd with long white cloud
the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—grey
 twilight pour'd
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
 Softer than sleep—all things in
 order stored,
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every land-
 scape fair,
 As fit for every mood of mind,
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or
 stern, was there,
 Not less than truth design'd.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
 Beneath branch-work of costly
 sardonyx
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
 Wound with white roses, slept
 St. Cecily;
 An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of
 Paradise,
 A group of Houris bow'd to see
 The dying Islamite, with hands
 and eyes
 That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded
 son

In some fair space of sloping
 greens
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
 And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against
 his ear,
 To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
 The wood-nymph, stay'd the
 Ausonian king to hear
 Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops
 engrail'd,
 And many a tract of palm and
 rice,
 The throne of Indian Cama slowly
 sail'd
 A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew
 unclasp'd,
 From off her shoulder backward
 borne :
 From one hand droop'd a crocus :
 one hand grasp'd
 The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy
 thigh
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
 Sole as a flying star shot thro' the
 sky
 Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend
 fair
 Which the supreme Caucasian
 mind
 Carved out of Nature for itself,
 was there,
 Not less than life, design'd.

Then in the towers I placed great
 bells that swung,
 Moved of themselves, with
 silver sound ;
 And with choice paintings of wise
 men I hung
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph
 strong,
 Beside him Shakespeare bland
 and mild ;
 And there the world-worn Dante
 grasp'd his song,
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the
 rest ;
 A million wrinkles carved his
 skin ;
 A hundred winters snow'd upon
 his breast,
 From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-
 set
 Many an arch high up did lift,
 And angels rising and descending
 met
 With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely
 plann'd
 With cycles of the human tale
 Of this wide world, the times of
 every land
 So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden
 slow,
 Toil'd onward, prick'd with
 goads and stings;
 Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and
 fro
 The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to
 break or bind
 All force in bonds that might
 endure,
 And here once more like some sick
 man declined,
 And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and
 those great bells
 Began to chime. She took her
 throne:
 She sat betwixt the shining
 Oriels,
 To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels'
 colour'd flame
 Two god-like faces gazed
 below;
 Plato the wise, and large-brow'd
 Verulam,
 The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their
 motion were
 Full-welling fountain-heads of
 change,
 Betwixt the slender shafts were
 blazon'd fair
 In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,
 emerald, blue,
 Flush'd in her temples and her
 eyes,
 And from her lips, as morn from
 Memnon, drew
 Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to pro-
 long
 Her low preamble all alone,
 More than my soul to hear her
 echo'd song
 Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her
 feastful mirth,
 Joying to feel herself alive,
 Lord over Nature, Lord of the
 visible earth,
 Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All
 these are mine,
 And let the world have peace
 or wars,
 'Tis one to me.' She—when young
 night divine
 Crown'd dying day with
 stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious
 toils—
 Lit light in wreaths and ana-
 dems,
 And pure quintessences of precious
 oils
 In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her
 hands and cried,
 'I marvel if my still delight
 In this great house so royal-rich,
 and wide,
 Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my
 various eyes!
 O shapes and hues that please
 me well!
 O silent faces of the Great and
 Wise,
 My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art
 mine,
 I can but count thee perfect
 gain,
 What time I watch the darkening
 droves of swine
 That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a
prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed
and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil
enters in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would
she prate,
And of the rising from the
dead,
As hers by right of full-accom-
plish'd Fate;
And at the last she said :

'I take possession of man's mind
and deed.
I care not what the sects may
brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of
creed,
But contemplating all.'

Full oft the riddle of the painful
earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat
alone,
Yet not the less held she her
solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd :
so three years
She prosper'd : on the fourth
she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was
in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish
utterly,
God, before whom ever lie
bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er
she turn'd her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought
Wrote 'Mene, mene,' and divided
quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her
solitude
Fell on her, from which mood
was born
Scorn of herself ; again, from out
that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What ! is not this my place of
strength,' she said,
'My spacious mansion built for
me,
Whereof the strong foundation
stones were laid
Since my first memory ?'

But in dark corners of her palace
stood
Uncertain shapes ; and un-
aware
On white-eyed phantasms weep-
ing tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts
of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads
all,
On corpses three-months-old at
noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without
light
Or power of movement, seem'd
my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions in-
finite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with
bars of sand ;
Left on the shore ; that hears all
night
The plunging seas draw backward
from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry
dance
Join'd not, but stood, and
standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Cir-
cumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride
had curl'd.

'No voice,' she shriek'd in that
lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness
of this world :
One deep, deep silence all !'

She, mouldering with the dull
earth's mouldering sod,
Inwapt tenfold in slothful
shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal
God,
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated
equally,
And nothing saw, for her
despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eter-
nity,
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with
fears,
And ever worse with growing
time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal
tears,
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb,
girt round
With blackness as a solid
wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the
dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller
walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the
low
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder,
or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one
deep cry
Of great wild beasts ; then
thinketh, 'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire
within.

There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my
sin,
And save me lest I die ?'

So when four years were wholly
finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
'Make me a cottage in the vale,'
she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace
towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with
others there
When I have purged my guilt.'

THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early,
call me early, mother dear ;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest
time of all the glad New-year ;
Of all the glad New-year, mother,
the maddest merriest day ;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

There's many a black black eye,
they say, but none so bright
as mine ;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's
Kate and Caroline :
But none so fair as little Alice in
all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother,
that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when
the day begins to break :
But I must gather knots of flowers,
and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o'
the May.

As I came up the valley whom
 think ye should I see,
 But Robin leaning on the bridge
 beneath the hazel-tree ?
 He thought of that sharp look,
 mother, I gave him yesterday,
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother,
 for I was all in white,
 And I ran by him without speak-
 ing, like a flash of light.
 They call me cruel-hearted, but I
 care not what they say,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

They say he's dying all for love,
 but that can never be :
 They say his heart is breaking,
 mother — what is that to
 me ?
 There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo
 me any summer day,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

Little Effie shall go with me
 to-morrow to the green,
 And you'll be there, too, mother,
 to see me made the Queen ;
 For the shepherd lads on every
 side 'ill come from far away,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch
 has wov'n its wavy bowers,
 And by the meadow-trenches blow
 the faint sweet cuckoo -
 flowers ;
 And the wild marsh-marigold
 shines like fire in swamps and
 hollows grey,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

The night-winds come and go,
 mother, upon the meadow-
 grass,
 And the happy stars above them
 seem to brighten as they pass ;
 There will not be a drop of rain
 the whole of the livelong day,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be
 fresh and green and still,
 And the cowslip and the crowfoot
 are over all the hill,
 And the rivulet in the flowery dale
 'ill merrily glance and play,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

So you must wake and call me
 early, call me early mother
 dear
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest
 time of all the glad New-
 year :
 To-morrow 'ill be of all the year
 the maddest merriest day,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o'
 the May.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early,
 call me early, mother dear,
 For I would see the sun rise upon
 the glad New-year.
 It is the last New-year that I shall
 ever see,
 Then you may lay me low i' the
 mould and think no more of
 me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set
 and left behind
 The good old year, the dear old
 time, and all my peace of
 mind ;
 And the New-year's coming up,
 mother, but I shall never see
 The blossom on the blackthorn,
 the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of
flowers: we had a merry
day;

Beneath the hawthorn on the
green they made me Queen
of May;

And we danced about the may-
pole and in the hazel copse,

Till Charles's Wain came out
above the tall white chimney-
tops.

There's not a flower on all the
hills: the frost is on the
pane:

I only wish to live till the snow-
drops come again:

I wish the snow would melt
and the sun come out on
high:

I long to see a flower so before the
day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from
the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along
the fallow lea,

And the swallow 'ill come back
again with summer o'er the
wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother,
within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and
upon that grave of mine,

In the early early morning the
summer sun 'ill shine,

Before the red cock crows from the
farm upon the hill,

When you are warm - asleep,
mother, and all the world is
still.

When the flowers come again,
mother, beneath the waning
light

You'll never see me more in
the long grey fields at
night;

When from the dry dark wold the
summer airs blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-
grass, and the bulrush in the
pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just
beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and
see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I
shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in
the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward,
but you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother,
and forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor
let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother,
you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother,
from out my resting-place;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I
shall look upon your face;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I
shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when
you think I'm far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I
have said goodnight for ever-
more,
And you see me carried out from
the threshold of the door;
Don't let Effie come to see me till
my grave be growing green:
She'll be a better child to you than
ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon
the granary floor:
Let her take 'em: they are hers:
I shall never garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to
train the rose-bush that I set
About the parlour-window and the
box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call
me before the day is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall
asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon
the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call
me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION

I thought to pass away before,
and yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear
the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the
morning of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came,
and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that
comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's
voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about,
and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life
to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother,
to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay,
and yet *His* will be done!
But still I think it can't be long
before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman,
has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and
on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life
long, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and
on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as
he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for
he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted
late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother,
again if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to
Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother,
or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when
the night and morning meet:
But sit beside my bed, mother,
and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I
will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I
heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting,
and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and
the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I
heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought
of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and
I no longer here;
With all my strength I pray'd for
both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of
music on the wind.

I thought that it was a fancy, and
I listen'd in my bed,
And then did somethings speak to me
—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering
took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the
music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said,
'It's not for them: it's mine.'
And if it comes three times, I
thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close
beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to
Heaven and die among the
stars.

So now I think my time is near.
I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way
my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not
if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her*
when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and
tell him not to fret;
There's many worthier than I,
would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I
might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased
to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise,
 the heavens are in a glow;
 He shines upon a hundred fields,
 and all of them I know.
 And there I move no longer
 now, and there his light may
 shine—

Wild flowers in the valley for other
 hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems
 to me, that ere this day is
 done

The voice, that now is speak-
 ing, may be beyond the
 sun—

For ever and for ever with those
 just souls and true—

And what is life, that we should
 moan? why make we such
 ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a
 blessed home—

And there to wait a little while till
 you and Effie come—

To lie within the light of God, as I
 lie upon your breast—

And the wicked cease from trou-
 bling, and the weary are at
 rest.

THE LOTOS EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed
 toward the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us
 shoreward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto
 a land

In which it seemed always after-
 noon.

All round the coast the languid
 air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a
 weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood
 the moon;

And like a downward smoke, the
 slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause
 and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a
 downward smoke,
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest
 lawn, did go;

And some thro' wavering lights
 and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam
 below.

They saw the gleaming river sea-
 ward flow

From the inner land: far off, three
 mountain-tops,

Threesilent pinnacles of aged snow,
 Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd
 with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above
 the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low
 adown

In the red West: thro' mountain
 clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the
 yellow down

Border'd with palm, and many a
 winding vale

And meadow, set with slender
 galingale;

A land where all things always
 seem'd the same!

And round about the keel with
 faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy
 flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos
 eaters came.

Branches they bore of that en-
 charmed stem,

Laden with flower and fruit,
 whereof they gave

To each, but whoso did receive of
 them,

And taste, to him the gushing of
 the wave

Far, far away did seem to mourn
 and rave

On alien shores; and if his fellow
 spake,

His voice was thin, as voices from
 the grave;

And deep asleep he seem'd, yet all
 awake,

And music in his ears his beating
 heart did make.

They sat them down upon the
yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon
the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of
Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but
evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary
the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of
barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will re-
turn no more;'
And all at once they sang, 'Our
island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will
no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that
softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on
the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters be-
tween walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming
pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit
lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down
from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies
creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved
flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the
poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with
heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp
distress,
While all things else have rest
from weariness?
All things have rest: why should
we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of
things,

And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another
thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's
holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit
sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof
and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out
the bud
With winds upon the branch, and
there
Grows green and broad, and takes
no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the
moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning
yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer
light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-
mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and
hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth
onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are
dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will
last?
All things are taken from us, and
become
Portions and parcels of the dread-
ful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can
we have

To war with evil? Is there any
 peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing
 wave?
 All things have rest, and ripen
 toward the grave
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark
 death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the
 downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder
 amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-
 bush on the height;
 To hear each other's whisper'd
 speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on
 the beach,
 And tender curving lines of
 creamy spray;
 To lend our hearts and spirits
 wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded
 melancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again
 in memory,
 With those old faces of our
 infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of
 grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut
 in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded
 lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our
 wives
 And their warm tears: but all
 hath suffer'd change;
 For surely now our household
 hearths are cold:
 Our sons inherit us: our looks are
 strange:
 And we should come like ghosts to
 trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-
 bold

Have eat our substance, and the
 minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten-years' war
 in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-
 forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little
 isle?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile:
 'Tis hard to settle order once
 again.
 There is confusion worse than
 death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out with
 many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing
 on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth
 and moly,
 How sweet (while warm airs lull
 us, blowing lowly)
 With half-dropt eyelids still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river
 drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-
 twined vine—
 To watch the emerald-colour'd
 water falling
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-
 wreath divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off
 sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd
 out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the bar-
 ren peak:
 The Lotos blows by every winding
 creek:
 All day the wind breathes low
 with mellow tone:
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley
 lone
 Round and round the spicy downs
 the yellow Lotos dust is blown.

We have had enough of action,
 and of motion we.
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to
 larboard, when the surge was
 seething free,
 Where the wallowing monster
 spouted his foam-fountains in
 the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it
 with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live
 and lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together,
 careless of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar,
 and the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and
 the clouds are lightly curl'd
 Round their golden houses, girdled
 with the gleaming world :
 Where they smile in secret, looking
 over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and
 earthquake, roaring deeps and
 fiery sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns,
 and sinking ships, and pray-
 ing hands.
 But they smile, they find a music
 centred in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and
 an ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho'
 the words are strong ;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of
 men that cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest
 with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat,
 and wine and oil ;
 Till they perish and they suffer—
 some, 'tis whisper'd—down in
 hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in
 Elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on
 beds of asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more
 sweet than toil, the shore
 Than labour in the deep mid-
 ocean, wind and wave and
 oar ;
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we
 will not wander more.

ROSALIND

I

MY Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My frolic falcon, with bright
 eyes,
 Whose free delight, from any
 height of rapid flight,
 Stoops at all game that wing the
 skies,
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,
 whither,
 Careless both of wind and weather,
 Whither fly ye, what game spy
 ye,
 Up or down the streaming wind ?

II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd
 strains,
 The shadow rushing up the sea,
 The lightning-flash atween the
 rains,
 The sunlight driving down the
 lea,
 The leaping stream, the very
 wind,
 That will not stay, upon his way,
 To stoop the cowslip to the
 plains,
 Is not so clear and bold and free
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.
 You care not for another's pains,
 Because you are the soul of joy,
 Bright metal all without alloy.
 Life shoots and glances thro' your
 veins,
 And flashes off a thousand ways,
 Through lips and eyes in subtle
 rays.
 Your hawk-eyes are keen and
 bright,
 Keen with triumph, watching
 still
 To pierce me through with pointed
 light ;
 But oftentimes they flash and
 glitter
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
 And your words are seeming-
 bitter
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
 From excess of swift delight.

III

Come down, come home, my
 Rosalind,
 My gay young hawk, my Rosa-
 lind:
 Too long you keep the upper
 skies;
 Too long you roam and wheel at
 will;
 But we must hood your random
 eyes,
 That care not whom they kill,
 And your cheek, whose brilliant
 hue
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
 Some red heath-flower in the
 dew,
 Touched with sunrise. We must
 bind
 And keep you fast, my Rosa-
 lind,
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosa-
 lind,
 And clip your wings, and make
 you love:
 When we have lured you from
 above,
 And that delight of frolic flight,
 by day or night,
 From North to South;
 We'll bind you fast in silken
 cords,
 And kiss away the bitter words
 From off your rosy mouth.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt
 their shade,
'The Legend of Good Women,'
 long ago
 Sung by the morning star of song,
 who made
 His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler,
 whose sweet breath
 Preluded those melodious bursts
 that fill
 The spacious times of great Eliza-
 beth
 With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge
 of his art
 Held me above the subject, as
 strong gales
 Hold swollen clouds from raining,
 tho' my heart,
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with
 tears. In every land
 I saw, wherever light illu-
 mineth,
 Beauty and anguish walking hand
 in hand
 The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of
 ancient song
 Peopled the hollow dark, like
 burning stars,
 And I heard sounds of insult,
 shame, and wrong,
 And trumpets blown for wars;

And clattering flints batter'd with
 clanging hoofs:
 And I saw crowds in column'd
 sanctuaries;
 And forms that pass'd at windows
 and on roofs
 Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold;
 heroes tall
 Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
 Upon the tortoise creeping to the
 wall;
 Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro'
 with heated blasts
 That run before the fluttering
 tongues of fire;
 White surf wind-scatter'd over
 sails and masts,
 And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in
 brazen plates,
 Scaffolds, still sheets of water,
 divers woes,
 Ranges of glimmering vaults with
 iron grates,
 And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,
 when to land
 Bluster the winds and tides the
 self-same way,
 Crisp foam-flakes scud along the
 level sand,
 Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start
 in pain,
 Resolved on noble things, and
 strove to speak,
 As when a great thought strikes
 along the brain,
 And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to
 hew down
 A cavalier from off his saddle-
 bow,
 That bore a lady from a leaguer'd
 town;
 And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-
 lapsing thought
 Stream'd onward, lost their
 edges, and did creep
 Roll'd on each other, rounded,
 smooth'd, and brought
 Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had
 wander'd far
 In an old wood: fresh-wash'd
 in coolest dew,
 The maiden splendours of the
 morning star
 Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop
 and lean
 Upon the dusky brushwood
 underneath
 Their broad curved branches,
 fledged with clearest green,
 New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her
 journey done,
 And with dead lips smiled at the
 twilight plain,
 Half-fall'n across the threshold of
 the sun,
 Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb
 dead air,
 Not any song of bird or sound
 of rill;
 Gross darkness of the inner se-
 pulchre
 Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of
 jasmine turn'd
 Their humid arms festooning
 tree to tree,
 And at the root thro' lush green
 grasses burn'd
 The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the
 leaves, I knew
 The tearful glimmer of the lan-
 guid dawn
 On those long, rank, dark wood—
 walks drench'd in dew,
 Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the
 green,
 Pour'd back into my empty
 soul and frame
 The times when I remember to
 have been
 Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-
 tone
 Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that
 unblissful clime,
 'Pass freely thro': the wood is all
 thine own,
 Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
 Stiller than chisell'd marble,
 standing there;
 A daughter of the gods, divinely
 tall,
 And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and
 with surprise
 Froze my swift speech: she
 turning on my face
 The star-like sorrows of immortal
 eyes,
 Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty : ask thou not
my name :
No one can be more wise than
destiny.
Many drew swords and died.
Where'er I came
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady : in
fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly
died,'
I answer'd free ; and turning I ap-
peal'd
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful
looks averse,
To her full height her stately
stature draws ;
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted
with a curse :
This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that
sad place,
Which yet to name my spirit
loathes and fears :
My father held his hand upon his
face ;
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak : my voice
was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could
descry
The stern black-bearded kings
with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they
lay afloat ;
The crowds, the temples, wa-
ver'd, and the shore ;
The bright death quiver'd at the
victim's throat ;
Touch'd ; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a down-
ward brow :
'I would the white cold heavy-
plunging foam,
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd
me deep below,
Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the
silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleep-
ing sea :
Sudden I heard a voice that cried,
'Come here,
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flow-
ery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf
unroll'd ;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and
bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty
smile, began :
'I govern'd men by change, and
so I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have
seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the
blood
According to my humour ebb
and flow.
I have no men to govern in this
wood :
That makes my only woe.

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I
could not bend
One will ; nor tame and tutor
with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar.
Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony ?

'The man, my lover, with whom I
rode sublime
On Fortune's neck : we sat as
God by God :
The Nilus would have risen before
his time
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to
sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburn'd Cano-
pus. O my life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and
the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh
from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman An-
tony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my
arms,
Contented there to die !

'And there he died : and when I
heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would
not brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I
balk'd his fame.
What else was left ? look here !'

(With that she tore her robe apart,
and half
The polish'd argent of her
breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed
with a laugh,
Showing the aspicks bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman
soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about
my brows,
A name for ever !—lying robed
and crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of
widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall
down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided
thro' all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not
for delight ;
Because with sudden motion
from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and
fill'd with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his
keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two
burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the
mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then
I heard
A noise of some one coming
thro' the lawn,
And singing clearer than the
crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd
Israel
From craggy hollows pouring,
late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling
thro' the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom
with beams divine :
All night the splinter'd crags that
wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad
sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral,
thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling
waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is
charm'd and tied
To where he stands,—so stood
I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that
died
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior
Gileadite,
A maiden pure ; as when she
went along,
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with
welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : 'Heaven
heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath.' She
render'd answer high :
'Not so, nor once alone ; a thou-
sand times
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green
plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-
pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my
flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—
these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that
Nature gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold
cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair
Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden
blame among
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied
of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive gardens far
below,
Leaving the promise of my
bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines
that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over
us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from
his den;
We saw the large white stars rise
one by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with
flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting
hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and
grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd
into the sky,
Strength came to me that
equall'd my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one
thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my
father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere
I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my
race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh,
from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here
her face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me
where I stood:
'Glory to God,' she sang, and
past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of
the wood,
Toward the morning star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement
leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing
suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of
care,
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn
and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men
call fair,
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden
coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the
light!
Those dragon eyes of anger'd
Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from
hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: 'O,
you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's
waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white
dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the
mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of
my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of
the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in
her last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or
Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her, who knew that Love can
vanguish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm
about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her
balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from
the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the
hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I
from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With
what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought
to strike
Into that wondrous track of
dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which
hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with
past years,
In yearnings that can never be
expressed
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with
choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the
sweet
Wither beneath the palate, and
the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

MARGARET

I

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful
power,
Like moonlight on a falling
shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal
dower
Of pensive thought and aspect
pale,
Your melancholy sweet and
frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward - winding
flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you
have won
A tearful grace, as tho' you
stood
Between the rainbow and the
sun.
The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent
cheek,
Encircles all the heart, and
feedeth
The senses with a still delight
Of dainty sorrow without
sound,
Like the tender amber round,
Which the moon about her
spreadeth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the
strife,
But enter not the toil of life.
Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the
fight.
You are the evening star, alway
Remaining betwixt dark and
bright:
Lull'd echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of
mellow light
Float by you on the verge of
night.

III

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning
 stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison
 bars ?
 Exquisite Margaret, who can
 tell
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,
 Just ere the falling axe did
 part
 The burning brain from the
 true heart ?
 Even in her sight he loved
 so well ?

IV

A fairy shield your Genius made
 And gave you on your natal
 day.
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
 Keeps real sorrow far away.
 You move not in such solitudes,
 You are not less divine,
 But more human in your moods,
 Than your twin sister, Ade-
 line.
 Your hair is darker, and your
 eyes
 Touch'd with a somewhat
 darker hue,
 And less ærially blue,
 But ever trembling thro' the
 dew
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

V

O sweet pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 Come down, come down, and hear
 me speak :
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
 The sun is just about to set,
 The arching limes are tall and
 shady,
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,
 Moving in the leavy beech.
 Rise from the feast of sorrow,
 lady,
 Where all day long you sit
 between
 Joy and woe, and whisper
 each.

Or only look across the lawn,
 Look out below your bower-
 eaves,
 Look down, and let your blue eyes
 dawn
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-
 leaves.

KATE

I KNOW her by her angry air,
 Her bright black eyes, her bright
 black hair,
 Her rapid laughters wild and
 shrill,
 As laughters of the woodpecker
 From the bosom of a hill.
 'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she
 will :
 For Kate hath an unbridled
 tongue,
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.
 Her heart is like a throb-
 bing star.
 Kate hath a spirit ever strung
 Like a new bow, and bright and
 sharp
 As edges of the scymetar.
 Whence shall she take a fitting
 mate ?
 For Kate no common love will
 feel ;
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
 As pure and true as blades of
 steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of
 might.'
 Kate saith 'the men are gilded
 flies.'
 Kate snaps her fingers at
 my vows ;
 Kate will not hear of lover's
 sighs.
 I would I were an arméd knight,
 Far-famed for well-won enter-
 prise,
 And wearing on my swarthy
 brows
 The garland of new-wreathed
 emprise
 For in a moment I would
 pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,
 And strongly strike to left and
 right,
 In dreaming of my lady's eyes.
 Oh! Kate loves well the
 bold and fierce;
 But none are bold enough for
 Kate,
 She cannot find a fitting mate.

SONNET

ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE
 RUSSIAN INVASION OF POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be
 ridden down,
 And trampled under by the last
 and least
 Of men? The heart of Poland
 hath not ceased
 To quiver, though her sacred blood
 doth drown
 The fields; and out of every
 smouldering town
 Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be
 increased,
 Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in
 the East
 Transgress his ample bound to
 some new crown:—
 Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long
 shall these things be?
 How long shall the icy-hearted
 Muscovite
 Oppress the region?' Us, O Just
 and Good,
 Forgive, who smiled when she was
 torn in three;
 Us, who stand *now*, when we
 should aid the right—
 A matter to be wept with tears of
 blood!

SONNET

As when with downcast eyes we
 muse and brood,
 And ebb into a former life, or seem
 To lapse far back in a confused
 dream
 To states of mystical similitude;

If one but speaks or hems or stirs
 his chair,
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and
 more,
 So that we say, 'All this hath been
 before,
 All this *hath* been, I know not
 when or where.'
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon
 your face,
 Our thought gave answer, each to
 each, so true,
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting
 each—
 Altho' I knew not in what time or
 place,
 Methought that I had often met
 with you,
 And each had lived in the other's
 mind and speech.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD
YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter
 snow,
 And the winter winds are wearily
 sighing:
 Toll ye the church bell sad and
 slow,
 And tread softly and speak low,
 For the old year lies a-dying.
 Old year, you must not
 die;
 You came to us so readily,
 You lived with us so
 steadily,
 Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
 He will not see the dawn of day.
 He hath no other life above.
 He gave me a friend, and a true
 true-love,
 And the New year will take 'em
 away.

Old year, you must not
 go;
 So long as you have been
 with us,
 Such joy as you have seen
 with us,
 Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the
brim;

A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry
with you,

I've half a mind to die with
you,

Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-
haste,

But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold,
my friend,

And the new year blithe
and bold, my friend,

Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the
snow

I heard just now the crowing
cock.

The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light
burns low:

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you
die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue
for you:

What is it we can do for
you?

Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.

Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him
in

That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the
floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door,
my friend,

A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the moun-
tain, blows

More softly round the open
wold,

And gently comes the world to
those

That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder
made,

Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and
invade

Even with a verse your holy
woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on
most,

Those in whose laps our limbs
are nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost:

Those we love first are taken
first.

God gives us love. Something to
love

He lends us; but, when love is
grown

To ripeness, that on which it
throve

Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!

In grief I am not all unlearn'd:
Once thro' mine own doors Death
did pass;

One went, who never hath
return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to
me

Once more. Two years his chair
is seen

Empty before us. That was he

Without whose life I had not
been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star

Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd
far

Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute
dust
I honour and his living worth :
A man more pure and bold and
just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n
asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with
dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the
brain,
I will not even preach to you,
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her
will
Be done—to weep or not to
weep.

I will not say 'God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every
wind ;'
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful
light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the
night.

Vainsolace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her
throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a
tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you any-
way,
Who miss the brother of your
youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my
true breast
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief
would make
Grief more. 'Twere better I
should cease ;
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in
peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons
increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and
sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or
strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of
change.

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown :
You thought to break a country
heart
For pastime, ere you went to
town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired :
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your
name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence
I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet
sake
A heart that doats on truer
charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must
find,

For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a
mind.

You sought to prove how I could
love,

And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in
my head.

Not thrice your branching limes
have blown

Since I beheld young Laurence
dead.

Oh your sweet eyes, your low
replies :

A great enchantress you may
be ;

But there was that across his
throat

Which you had hardly cared to
see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's
view,

She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths
of you.

Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;

Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere
de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your
hall :

The guilt of blood is at your
door :

You changed a wholesome heart
to gall.

You held your course without
remorse,

To make him trust his modest
worth,

And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble
birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above
us bent

The grand old gardener and his
wife

Smile at the claims of long
descent.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coro-
nets,

And simple faith than Norman
blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and
towers :

The languid light of your proud
eyes

Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless
wealth,

But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such
pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,

Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands ?

Oh ! teach the orphan boy to read
Or teach the orphan girl to sew,

Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something
well :

While all the neighbours shoot
thee round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful
ground,

Where thou may'st warble, eat
and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine ; the range of lawn
and park :

The unnetted black-hearts ripen
dark,

All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the
spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry :
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once,
when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed
to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawk hawk his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the
blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves
are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of
Spring.

BRITAIN

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober - suited Freedom
chose,
The land, where girt with friends
or foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly
down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness
wrought,
The strength of some diffusive
thought
Hath time and space to work and
spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil
crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from
land to land
The name of Britain trebly
great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden
sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-
mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer
sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the
South.

FREEDOM

Or old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her
feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-
mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town
and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple
forks.
And, King - like, wears the
crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and
shine,
Make bright our days and light
our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

LOVE THOU THY LAND

LOVE thou thy land, with love
far brought
From out the storied Past, and
used
Within the Present, but trans-
fused
Thro' future time by power of
thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed
poles,
Love, that endures not sordid
ends,
For English natures, freemen,
friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble
wings,
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait
for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful
light.

Make knowledge circle with the
winds;
But let her herald, Reverence,
fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of
minds.

Watch what main-currents draw
the years :
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always
gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on
praise :
It grows to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words over-
much ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Not master'd by some modern
term ;
Not swift nor slow to change,
but firm
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may
fall
With Life, that, working strong-
ly, binds—
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising
long,
Thro' many agents making
strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still
degrees
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be
free
To ingroove itself with that
which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that
plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded
Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward
strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with
Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school;
 Phantoms of other forms of
 rule,
 New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing
 hour,
 But vague in vapour, hard to
 mark;
 And round them sea and air are
 dark
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
 Is bodied forth the second
 whole,
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
 And heap their ashes on the
 head;
 To shame the boast so often
 made,
 That we are wiser than our
 sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
 Drive men in manhood, as in
 youth,
 To follow flying steps of Truth
 Across the brazen bridge of
 war—

If New and Old, disastrous
 feud,
 Must ever shock, like armed
 foes,
 And this be true, till Time shall
 close,
 That Principles are rain'd in
 blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would
 cease
 To hold his hope thro' shame
 and guilt,
 But with his hand against the
 hilt,
 Would pace the troubled land,
 like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
 Would serve his kind in deed
 and word,
 Certain, if knowledge bring the
 sword,
 That knowledge takes the sword
 away—

Would love the gleams of good
 that broke
 From either side, nor veil his
 eyes:
 And if some dreadful need
 should rise
 Would strike, and firmly, and one
 stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-
 day,
 As we bear blossom of the dead;
 Earn well the thrifty months,
 nor wed
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and
 poor,
 Her rags scarce held together;
 There strode a stranger to the
 door,
 And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
 He utter'd rhyme and reason,
 'Here, take the goose, and keep
 you warm,
 It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the
 leg,
 A goose—'twas no great matter.
 The goose let fall a golden egg
 With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught
 the pelf,
 And ran to tell her neighbours;
 And bless'd herself, and cursed
 herself
 And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,
 Grew plump and able-bodied;
 Until the grave churchwarden
 doff'd,
 The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and
 maid,
 She felt her heart grow prouder :
 But ah ! the more the white goose
 laid
 It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled
 there;
 It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :
 She shifted in her elbow-chair,
 And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed
 note !'
 Then wax'd her anger stronger.
 'Go, take the goose, and wring her
 throat,
 I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd
 the cat;
 Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
 The goose flew this way and flew
 that,
 And fill'd the house with clam-
 our.

As head and heels upon the
 floor
 They flounder'd all together,
 There strode a stranger to the
 door
 And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his
 arm,
 He utter'd words of scorning ;
 'So keep you cold, or keep you
 warm,
 It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park
 and plain,
 And round the attics rumbled,
 Till all the tables danced again,
 And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew
 out,
 The blast was hard and harder,
 Her cap blew off, her gown blew
 up,
 And a whirlwind clear'd the
 larder;

And while on all sides breaking
 loose
 Her household fled the danger,
 Quoth she, 'The Devil take the
 goose,
 And God forget the stranger !'

THE EPIC

AT Francis Allen's on the Christ-
 mas-eve—

The game of forfeits done—the
 girls all kiss'd
 Beneath the sacred bush and past
 away—

The parson Holmes, the poet
 Everard Hall,

The host, and I sat round the
 wassail-bowl,

Then half-way ebb'd : and there
 we held a talk,

How all the old honour had from
 Christmas gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to
 some odd games

In some odd nooks like this ; till I,
 tired out

With cutting eights that day upon
 the pond,

Where, three times slipping from
 the outer edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several
 stars,

Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I
 heard

The parson taking wide and wider
 sweeps,

Now harping on the church-
 commissioners,

Now hawking at Geology and
 schism ;

Until I woke, and found him
 settled down

Upon the general decay of faith

Right thro' the world, 'at home
 was little left,
 And none abroad: there was no
 anchor, none,
 To hold by.' Francis, laughing,
 clapt his hand
 On Everard's shoulder, with 'I
 hold by him.'
 'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the
 wassail-bowl.'
 'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your
 gift that way
 At college: but another which
 you had,
 I mean of verse (for so we held it
 then),
 What came of that?' 'You know,'
 said Frank, 'he burnt
 His epic, his King Arthur, some
 twelve books'—
 And then to me demanding why?
 'Oh, sir,
 He thought that nothing new was
 said, or else
 Something so said 'twas nothing—
 that a truth
 Looks freshest in the fashion of
 the day:
 God knows: he has a mint of
 reasons: ask.
 It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay,
 nay,' said Hall,
 'Why take the style of those
 heroic times?
 For nature brings not back the
 Mastodon,
 Nor we those times; and why
 should any man
 Remodel models? these twelve
 books of mine
 Were faint Homeric echoes,
 nothing-worth,
 Mere chaff and draff, much better
 burnt.' 'But I,'
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh
 from this hearth,
 And have it: keep a thing, its
 use will come.
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for
 Holmes.'
 He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy,
 like a horse
 That hears the corn-bin open,
 prick'd my ears;

For I remember'd Everard's
 college fame
 When we were Freshmen: then
 at my request
 He brought it; and the poet little
 urged,
 But with some prelude of dis-
 paragement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes
 and aes,
 Deep-chested music, and to this
 result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle
 roll'd
 Among the mountains by the
 winter sea;
 Until King Arthur's table, man
 by man,
 Had fall'n in Lyonesse about
 their Lord,
 King Arthur: then, because his
 wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his
 knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the
 field,
 A broken chancel with a broken
 cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of
 barren land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and
 on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon
 was full.
 Then spake King Arthur to
 Sir Bedivere:
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous
 knights
 Whereof this world holds record.
 Such a sleep
 They sleep—the men I loved. I
 think that we
 Shall never more, at any future
 time,
 Delight our souls with talk of
 knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and
 the halls

Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again

To rule once more—but let what will be, be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm

That without help I cannot last till morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,

Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king:

And, wheresoever I am sung or told

In aftertime, this also shall be known:

But now delay not: take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle mere:

Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:

'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.

A little thing may harm a wounded man.

Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept

And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work

Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,

In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted water-flags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,

And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as besem'd

Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight:
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
 I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'
 Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere.
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud,
 'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
 What good should follow this, if this were done?
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself?
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much fame were lost.'
 So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
 'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'
 To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
 'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all,
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,

And the third time may prosper,
get thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excali-
bur,

I will arise and slay thee with my
hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,
and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges
lightly, plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and
clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw
it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour
of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the north-
ern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of
winter shock

By night, with noises of the
northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Ex-
calibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose
an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under
in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, draw-
ing thicker breath :

'Now see I by thine eyes that this
is done.

Speak out : what is it thou hast
heard, or seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere :

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids,
lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I
never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere,
till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mor-
tal men,

So great a miracle as yonder
hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him ;

But when I look'd again, behold
an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic,
wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under
in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard :

'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that
I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to re-
ceive my weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I
fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement
he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,

And looking wistfully with wide
blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his

tears,

And would have spoken, but he
found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling
on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the
languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place
of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on
his bed

When all the house is mute. So
sigh'd the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his
ear, 'Quick, quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.
But the other swiftly strode from

ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and look-

ing, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen

hills.
He heard the deep behind him,
and a cry

Before. His own thought drove
 him like a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
 caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left
 and right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round
 him, as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag
 that rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of
 armed heels—
 And on a sudden, lo! the level
 lake,
 And the long glories of the winter
 moon.
 Then saw they how there hove
 a dusky barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem
 to stern,
 Beneath them; and descending
 they were ware
 That all the decks were dense with
 stately forms
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
 dream—by these
 Three Queens with crowns of gold
 —and from them rose
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
 stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an
 agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind, that
 shrills
 All night in a waste land, where
 no one comes,
 Or hath come, since the making of
 the world.
 Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place
 me in the barge,'
 And to the barge they came.
 There those three Queens
 Put forth their hands, and took
 the King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of
 them all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her
 lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque,
 and chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, com-
 plaining loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against
 his brow

Striped with dark blood: for all
 his face was white
 And colourless, and like the
 wither'd moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the
 springing east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses
 dash'd with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lus-
 trous curls—
 That made his forehead like a
 rising sun
 High from the daïs-throne—were
 parch'd with dust;
 Or, clotted into points and hang-
 ing loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth
 that fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 King;
 Not like that Arthur who, with
 lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of
 tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot,
 and charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of
 kings.
 Then loudly cried the bold Sir
 Bedivere,
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither
 shall I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead
 and my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times
 are dead,
 When every morning brought a
 noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a
 noble knight.
 Such times have been not since
 the light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of
 myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE
 is dissolved
 Which was an image of the
 mighty world;
 And I, the last, go forth com-
 panionless,
 And the days darken round me,
 and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces,
 other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur
 from the barge :
 'The old order changeth, yielding
 place to new,
 And God fulfils Himself in many
 ways,
 Lest one good custom should
 corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is
 in me ?
 I have lived my life, and that
 which I have done
 May He within Himself make
 pure ! but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face
 again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are
 wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Where-
 fore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night
 and day.
 For what are men better than
 sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within
 the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not
 hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those
 who call them friend ?
 For so the whole round earth is
 every way
 Bound by gold chains about the
 feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a
 long way
 With these thou seest—if indeed
 I go—
 (For all my mind is clouded with
 a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avi-
 lion ;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
 snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but
 it lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
 orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with
 summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my
 grievous wound.'
 So said he, and the barge with
 oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some
 full-breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her
 death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and
 takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood
 Sir Bedivere
 Revolving many memories, till the
 hull
 Look'd one black dot against the
 verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died
 away.

Here ended Hall, and our last
 light, that long
 Had wink'd and threaten'd dark-
 ness, flared and fell :
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep
 with sound,
 And waked with silence, grunted
 'Good !' but we
 Sat rapt : it was the tone with
 which he read—
 Perhaps some modern touches
 here and there
 Redeem'd it from the charge of
 nothingness—
 Or else we loved the man and
 prized his work ;
 I know not : but we sitting, as I
 said,
 The cock crew loud ; as at that
 time of year
 The lusty bird takes every hour
 for dawn :
 Then Francis, muttering, like a
 man ill-used,
 'There now — that's nothing !'
 drew a little back,
 And drove his heel into the
 smoulder'd log,
 That sent a blast of sparkles up
 the flue :
 And so to bed ; where yet in sleep
 I seem'd
 To sail with Arthur under looming
 shores,
 Point after point ; till on to dawn,
 when dreams
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of
 day,

To me, methought, who waited
 with a crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing
 forward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern
 gentleman
 Of stateliest port; and all the
 people cried,
 'Arthur is come again: he cannot
 die.'
 Then those that stood upon the
 hills behind
 Repeated — 'Come again, and
 thrice as fair;'
 And, further inland, voices echoed
 — 'Come
 With all good things, and war
 shall be no more.'
 At this a hundred bells began to
 peal,
 That with the sound I woke, and
 heard indeed
 The clear church-bells ring in the
 Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the
 day,
 When I and Eustace from the city
 went
 To see the Gardener's Daughter;
 I and he,
 Brothers in Art; a friendship so
 complete
 Portion'd in halves between us,
 that we grew
 The fable of the city where we
 dwelt.
 My Eustace might have sat for
 Hercules;
 So muscular he spread, so broad
 of breast.
 He, by some law that holds in love,
 and draws
 The greater to the lesser, long
 desired
 A certain miracle of symmetry,
 A miniature of loveliness, all
 grace
 Summ'd up and closed in little;—
 Juliet, she

So light of foot, so light of spirit—
 oh, she
 To me myself, for some three care-
 less moons,
 The summer pilot of an empty
 heart
 Unto the shores of nothing! Know
 you not
 Such touches are but embassies of
 love,
 To tamper with the feelings, ere
 he found
 Empire for life? but Eustace
 painted her,
 And said to me, she sitting with
 us then,
 'When will *you* paint like this?'
 and I replied,
 (My words were half in earnest,
 half in jest,)
 "'Tis not your work, but Love's.
 Love, unperceived,
 A more ideal Artist he than
 all,
 Came, drew your pencil from you,
 made those eyes
 Darker than darkest pansies, and
 that hair
 More black than ashbuds in the
 front of March.'
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go
 and see
 The Gardener's daughter: trust
 me, after that,
 You scarce can fail to match his
 masterpiece.'
 And up we rose, and on the spur
 we went.
 Not wholly in the busy world,
 nor quite
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that
 I love.
 News from the humming city
 comes to it
 In sound of funeral or of marriage
 bells;
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,
 you hear
 The windy clanging of the minster
 clock;
 Although between it and the gar-
 den lies
 A league of grass, wash'd by a slow
 broad stream,

That, stirr'd with languid pulses
 of the oar,
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps
 on,
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a
 bridge
 Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-
 udder'd kine,
 And all about the large lime
 feathers low,
 The lime a summer home of
 murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded
 in herself,

Grew, seldom seen: not less
 among us lived

Her fame from lip to lip. Who had
 not heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter?
 Where was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at
 heart,

At such a distance from his youth
 in grief,

That, having seen, forgot? The
 common mouth,

So gross to express delight, in
 praise of her

Grew oratory. Such a lord is
 Love,

And Beauty such a mistress of the
 world.

And if I said that Fancy, led
 by Love,

Would play with flying forms and
 images,

Yet this is also true, that, long
 before

I look'd upon her, when I heard
 her name

My heart was like a prophet to
 my heart,

And told me I should love. A
 crowd of hopes,

That sought to sow themselves
 like winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and
 saw,

Flutter'd about my senses and
 my soul;

And vague desires, like fitful
 blasts of balm

To one that travels quickly, made
 the air

Of Life delicious, and all kinds of
 thought,

That verged upon them, sweeter
 than the dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when
 the dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his
 bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the
 memory folds

For ever in itself the day we went
 To see her. All the land in flowery

squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-
 blowing wind,

Smelt of the coming summer, as
 one large cloud

Drew downward: but all else off
 Heaven was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from
 verge to verge,

And May with me from head to
 heel. And now,

As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho'
 it were

The hour just flown, that morn
 with all its sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice
 the life of these),

Rings in mine ears. The steers
 forgot to graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts
 the pathway, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neigh-
 bour field,

And lowing to his fellows. From
 the woods

Came voices of the well-contented
 doves.

The lark could scarce get out his
 notes for joy

But shook his song together as
 he near'd

His happy home, the ground. Too
 left and right,

The cuckoo told his name to all
 the hills;

The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;

The redcap whistled; and the
 nightingale

Sang loud, as tho' he were the
 bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling
 said to me,
 'Hear how the bushes echo! by
 my life,
 These birds have joyful thoughts.
 Think you they sing
 Like poets, from the vanity of song?
 Or have they any sense of why
 they sing;
 And would they praise the heavens
 for what they have?'
 And I made answer, 'Were there
 nothing else
 For which to praise the heavens
 but only love,
 That only love were cause enough
 for praise.'
 Lightly he laugh'd, as one that
 read my thought,
 And on we went; but ere an hour
 had pass'd,
 We reach'd a meadow slanting
 to the North;
 Down which a well-worn pathway
 courted us
 To one green wicket in a privet
 hedge;
 This, yielding, gave into a grassy
 walk
 Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly
 pruned;
 And one warm gust, full-fed with
 perfume, blew
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
 The garden stretches southward.
 In the midst
 A cedar spread his dark-green
 layers of shade.
 The garden-glasses shone, and
 momentarily
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd
 silver lights.
 'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder
 keeps the house.
 He nodded, but a moment after-
 wards
 He cried, 'Look! look!' Before
 he ceased I turn'd,
 And, ere a star can wink, beheld
 her there.
 For up the porch there grew an
 Eastern rose,
 That, flowering high, the last
 night's gale had caught,

And blown across the walk. One
 arm aloft—
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted
 to the shape—
 Holding the bush, to fix it back,
 she stood.
 A single stream of all her soft
 brown hair
 Pour'd on one side: the shadow
 of the flowers
 Stole all the golden gloss, and,
 wavering
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her
 waist—
 Ah, happy shade—and still went
 wavering down,
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that
 might have danced
 The greensward into greener
 circles, dipt,
 And mix'd with shadows of the
 common ground!
 But the full day dwelt on her
 brows, and sunn'd
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe
 bloom,
 And doubled his own warmth
 against her lips,
 And on the bounteous wave of
 such a breast
 As never pencil drew. Half light,
 half shade,
 She stood, a sight to make an old
 man young.
 So rapt, we near'd the house;
 but she, a Rose
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant
 toil,
 Nor heard us come, nor from her
 tendance turn'd
 Into the world without; till close
 at hand,
 And almost ere I knew mine own
 intent,
 This murmur broke the stillness of
 that air
 Which brooded round about
 her :
 'Ah, one rose,
 One rose, but one, by those fair
 fingers cull'd,
 Were worth a hundred kisses
 press'd on lips
 Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd : but all
 Suffused with blushes—neither
 self-possess'd
 Nor startled, but betwixt this
 mood and that,
 Divided in a graceful quiet—
 paused,
 And dropt the branch she held,
 and turning, wound
 Her looser hair in braid, and
 stirr'd her lips
 For some sweet answer, tho' no
 answer came,
 Nor yet refused the rose, but
 granted it,
 And moved away, and left me,
 statue-like,
 In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd
 there
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's
 white star
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar
 in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the
 livelong way
 With solemn gibe did Eustace
 banter me.

'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the
 top of Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues
 to dim

The Titianic Flora. Will you
 match

My Juliet? you, not you,—the
 Master, Love,

A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not
 sleep for joy,

Reading her perfect features in the
 gloom,

Kissing the rose she gave me o'er
 and o'er,

And shaping faithful record of the
 glance

That graced the giving—such a
 noise of life

Swarm'd in the golden present,
 such a voice

Call'd to me from the years to
 come, and such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd
 the dark.

And all that night I heard the
 watchman peal

The sliding season : all that night
 I heard

The heavy clocks knolling the
 drowsy hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of
 all good,

O'er the mute city stole with
 folded wings,

Distilling odours on me as they
 went

To greet their fairer sisters of the
 East.

Love at first sight, first-born,
 and heir to all,

Made this night thus. Hencefor-
 ward squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden
 where she dwelt.

Light pretexts drew me : some-
 times a Dutch love

For tulips ; then for roses, moss or
 musk,

To grace my city rooms ; or fruits
 and cream

Served in the weeping elm ; and
 more and more

A word could bring the colour to
 my cheek ;

A thought would fill my eyes with
 happy dew ;

Love trebled life within me, and
 with each

The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
 One after one, thro' that still gar-
 den pass'd :

Each garlanded with her peculiar
 flower

Danced into light, and died into
 the shade ;

And each in passing touch'd with
 some new grace,

Or seem'd to touch her, so that
 day by day,

Like one that never can be wholly
 known,

Her beauty grew ; till Autumn
 brought an hour

For Eustace, when I heard his
 deep 'I will,'

Breathed, like the covenant of a
 God, to hold

From thence thro' all the worlds :
 but I rose up
 Full of his bliss, and following her
 dark eyes
 Felt earth as air beneath me, till I
 reach'd
 The wicket-gate, and found her
 standing there.
 There sat we down upon a
 garden mound,
 Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the
 third,
 Between us, in the circle of his
 arms
 Enwound us both ; and over many
 a range
 Of waning lime the grey cathedral
 towers,
 Across a hazy glimmer of the
 west,
 Reveal'd their shining windows :
 from them clash'd
 The bells ; we listened ; with the
 time we play'd ;
 We spoke of other things ; we
 coursed about
 The subject most at heart, more
 near and near,
 Like doves about a dovecote,
 wheeling round
 The central wish, until we settled
 there.
 Then, in that time and place, I
 spoke to her,
 Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine
 own,
 Yet for the pleasure that I took
 to hear,
 Requiring at her hand the greatest
 gift,
 A woman's heart, the heart of her
 I loved ;
 And in that time and place she
 answer'd me,
 And in the compass of three little
 words,
 More musical than ever came in
 one,
 The silver fragments of a broken
 voice,
 Made me most happy, faltering ' I
 am thine.'
 Shall I cease here ? Is this
 enough to say

That my desire, like all strongest
 hopes,
 By its own energy fulfill'd it-
 self,
 Merged in completion ? Would
 you learn at full
 How passion rose thro' circum-
 stantial grades
 Beyond all grades develop'd ? and
 indeed
 I had not staid so long to tell you
 all,
 But while I mused came Memory
 with sad eyes,
 Holding the folded annals of my
 youth ;
 And while I mused, Love with knit
 brows went by,
 And with a flying finger swept my
 lips,
 And spake, ' Be wise : not easily
 forgiven
 Are those, who setting wide the
 doors, that bar
 The secret bridal chambers of the
 heart,
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my
 words have end.
 Yet might I tell of meetings, of
 farewells—
 Of that which came between, more
 sweet than each,
 In whispers, like the whispers of
 the leaves
 That tremble round a nightingale
 —in sighs
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for
 utterance,
 Stole from her sister Sorrow.
 Might I not tell
 Of difference, reconciliation, pled-
 ges given,
 And vows, where there was never
 need of vows,
 And kisses, where the heart on one
 wild leap
 Hung tranced from all pulsation,
 as above
 The heavens between their fairy
 fleeces pale
 Sow'd their mystic gulfs with
 fleeting stars ;
 Or while the balmy glooming,
 crescent-lit,

Spread the light haze along the
river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we
met

Unheeding, tho' beneath a whis-
pering rain

Night slid down one long stream
of sighing wind,

And in her bosom bore the baby,
Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes
have been intent

On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for
what it holds

May not be dwelt on by the com-
mon day.

This prelude has prepared thee.
Raise thy soul;

Make thine heart ready with thine
eyes: the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my
heart,

My first, last love; the idol of my
youth,

The darling of my manhood, and,
alas!

Now the most blessed memory of
mine age.

DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm
abode

William and Dora. William was
his son,

And she his niece. He often look'd
at them,

And often thought 'I'll make them
man and wife.'

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in
all;

And yearn'd towards William; but
the youth, because

He had been always with her in
the house,

Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and
said, 'My son:

I married late, but I would wish
to see

My grandchild on my knees before
I die:

And I have set my heart upon a
match.

Now therefore look to Dora; she
is well

To look to; thrifty too beyond her
age.

She is my brother's daughter: he
and I

Had once hard words, and parted,
and he died

In foreign lands; but for his sake
I bred

His daughter Dora: take her for
your wife;

For I have wish'd this marriage,
night and day,

For many years.' But William
answer'd short;

'I cannot marry Dora; by my
life,

I will not marry Dora.' Then the
old man

Was wroth, and doubled up his
hands, and said:

'You will not, boy! you dare to
answer thus!

But in my time a father's word
was law,

And so it shall be now for me.
Look to it;

Consider, William: take a month
to think,

And let me have an answer to my
wish;

Or, by the Lord that made me,
you shall pack,

And never more darken my doors
again.'

But William answer'd madly; bit
his lips,

And broke away. The more he
look'd at her

The less he liked her; and his ways
were harsh;

But Dora bore them meekly.
Then before

The month was out he left his
father's house,

And hired himself to work within
the fields;

And half in love, half spite, he
 woo'd and wed
 A labourer's daughter, Mary
 Morrison.

Then, when the bells were
 ringing, Allan call'd

His niece and said: 'My girl, I
 love you well;

But if you speak with him that
 was my son,

Or change a word with her he calls
 his wife,

My home is none of yours. My
 will is law.'

And Dora promised, being meek.
 She thought,

'It cannot be: my uncle's mind
 will change!'

And days went on, and there
 was born a boy

To William; then distresses came
 on him;

And day by day he pass'd his
 father's gate,

Heart-broken, and his father
 help'd him not.

But Dora stored what little she
 could save,

And sent it them by stealth, nor
 did they know

Who sent it; till at last a fever
 seized

On William, and in harvest time
 he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary
 sat

And look'd with tears upon her
 boy, and thought

Hard things of Dora. Dora came
 and said:

'I have obey'd my uncle until
 now,

And I have sinn'd, for it was all
 thro' me

This evil came on William at the
 first.

But, Mary, for the sake of him
 that's gone,

And for your sake, the woman that
 he chose,

And for this orphan, I am come
 to you:

You know there has not been for
 these five years

So full a harvest: let me take the
 boy,

And I will set him in my uncle's
 eye

Among the wheat; that when his
 heart is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the
 boy,

And bless him for the sake of him
 that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and
 went her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a
 mound

That was unsown, where many
 poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the
 field

And spied her not; for none of all
 his men

Dare tell him Dora waited with
 the child;

And Dora would have risen and
 gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her; and the
 reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land
 was dark.

But when the morrow came, she
 rose and took

The child once more, and sat upon
 the mound;

And made a little wreath of all the
 flowers

That grew about, and tied it round
 his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's
 eye.

Then when the farmer pass'd into
 the field

He spied her, and he left his men
 at work,

And came and said: 'Where were
 you yesterday?

Whose child is that? What are
 you doing here?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the
 ground,

And answer'd softly, 'This is
 William's child!'

'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I
 not

Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said
 again:

'Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !'
And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you !
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;
But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that helped her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy ;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :
He says that he will never see me more.'
Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,

For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;
And I will beg of him to take thee back :
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grand-sire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her :

And Allan set him down, and Mary said :
'O Father !—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child ; but now I come
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said

That he was wrong to cross his
father thus :

"God bless him !" he said, "and
may he never know

The troubles I have gone thro' !"
Then he turn'd

His face and pass'd—unhappy
that I am !

But now, Sir, let me have my boy,
for you

Will make him hard, and he will
learn to slight

His father's memory ; and take
Dora back,

And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her
face

By Mary. There was silence in
the room ;

And all at once the old man burst
in sobs :—

'I have been to blame—to
blame. I have kill'd my son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved
him—my dear son.

May God forgive me !—I have been
to blame.

Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd
him many times.

And all the man was broken with
remorse ;

And all his love came back a hun-
dredfold ;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er
William's child,

Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together ; and
as years

Went forward, Mary took another
mate ;

But Dora lived unmarried till her
death.

AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd,
and not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic
there

At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the
narrow quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the

boat,
And breathing of the sea. 'With
all my heart,'

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd
thro' the swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of
the beach

To where the bay runs up its
latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that
faintly lipp'd

The flat red granite ; so by many
a sweep

Of meadow smooth from after-
math we reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and
pass'd thro' all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding
sycamores,

And cross'd the garden to the gar-
dener's lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and
its walls

And chimneys muffled in the leafy
vine.

There, on a slope of orchard,
Francis laid

A damask napkin wrought with
horse and hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that
smelt of home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly
made,

Where quail and pigeon, lark and
leveret lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with
golden yolks

Imbedded and injellied ; last, with
these,

A flask of cider from his father's
vats,

Prime, which I knew ; and so we
sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over ; who
was dead,

Who married, who was like to be,
and how

The races went, and who would
rent the hall :

Then touch'd upon the game, how
 scarce it was
 This season; glancing thence,
 discuss'd the farm,
 The four-field system, and the
 price of grain;
 And struck upon the corn-laws,
 where we split,
 And came again together on the
 king
 With heated faces; till he laugh'd
 aloud;
 And, while the blackbird on the
 pippin hung
 To hear him, clapt his hand in
 mine and sang—

'Oh! who would fight and march
 and countermarch,
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-
 field,
 And shovell'd up into a bloody
 trench
 Where no one knows? but let me
 live my life.

'Oh! who would cast and
 balance at a desk,
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-
 legg'd stool,
 Till all his juice is dried, and all
 his joints
 Are full of chalk? but let me live
 my life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I
 carved my name
 Upon the cliffs that guard my
 native land,
 I might as well have traced it in
 the sands;
 The sea wastes all: but let me live
 my life.

'Oh! who would love? I woo'd
 a woman once,
 But she was sharper than an
 eastern wind,
 And all my heart turn'd from her,
 as a thorn
 Turns from the sea: but let me
 live my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied
 with mine:
 I found it in a volume, all of
 songs,
 Knock'd down to me, when old
 Sir Robert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so
 I said—

Came to the hammer here in
 March—and this—

I set the words, and added names
 I knew.

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and
 dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's
 arm,

And sleeping, haply dream her
 arm is mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's
 arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but
 thou,

For thou art fairer than all else
 that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and
 peace upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust
 against her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow
 morn.

'I go, but I return: I would I
 were

The pilot of the darkness and the
 dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and
 dream of me.'

So sang we each to either,
 Francis Hale,

The farmer's son, who lived across
 the bay,

My friend; and I, that having
 wherewithal,

And in the fallow leisure of my
 life

A rolling stone of here and every-
 where,

Did what I would; but ere the
 night we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a
 moon, that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about
 the leaf

Twilights of airy silver, till we
 reach'd

The limit of the hills; and as we
 sank

From rock to rock upon the
 glooming quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us:
 lower down

The bay was oily calm; the
harbour-buoy
With one green sparkle ever and
anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad
at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How
fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month
ago,
The whole hill-side was redder
than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this by-
way joins
The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this
come by?

James. The mail? At one
o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see?
No, not the County Member's with
the vane:

Up higher with the yew-tree by it,
and half

A score of gables.

James. That? Sir Edward
Head's:

But he's abroad: the place is to
be sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not
broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his
blood

That veil'd the world with jaun-
dice, hid his face

From all men, and commercing
with himself,

He lost the sense that handles
daily life—

That keeps us all in order more or
less—

And sick of home went overseas
for change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's
here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with
him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky
Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man—on
Monday, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow;
half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and
made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker
tickling trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the
Latin word?—

Delicto: but his house, for so they
say,

Was haunted with a jolly ghost,
that shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies,
tapt at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no
servant stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds
and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and
with his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon
the tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who
hails him, 'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flit-
ting,' says the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing
among the beds,)

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting
with us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and
home again.'

John. He left his wife behind;
for so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I
met my lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh
as crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember,
ten years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and
then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter
thing:

A body slight and round, and like
a pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand,
a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and
a skin
As clean and white as privet when
it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom
fades, and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were
cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt
shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and
her, she sour'd
To what she is: a nature never
kind!

Like men, like manners: like
breeds like, they say.
Kind nature is the best: those
manners next
That fit us like a nature second-
hand;
Which are indeed the manners of
the great.

John. But I had heard it was
this bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that
drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop
in the cup of gall.
I once was near him, when his
bailliff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have
seen him wince
As from a venomous thing: he
thought himself
A mark for all, and shudder'd,
lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night,
and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's
bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but,
sir, you know
That these two parties still divide
the world—
Of those that want, and those that
have: and still
The same old sore breaks out from
age to age
With much the same result. Now
I myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy

Destructive, when I had not what
I would.

I was at school—a college in the
South:

There lived a flayflint near; we
stole his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was
law for us;

We paid in person. He had a
sow, sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much
content,

Lay great with pig, wallowing in
sun and mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the
college tower

From her warm bed, and up the
corkscrew stair

With hand and rope we haled the
groaning sow,

And on the leads we kept her till
she pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the
mother sow,

And but for daily loss of one she
loved,

As one by one we took them—but
for this—

As never sow was higher in this
world—

Might have been happy: but what
lot is pure?

We took them all, till she was left
alone

Upon her tower, the Niobe of
swine,

And so return'd unfarrow'd to her
sty.

John. They found you out?

James. Not they.

John. Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a
man?

His nerves were wrong. What
ails us, who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw
fool the world,

Which charts us all in its coarse
blacks or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he
grows

To Pity—more from ignorance
than will.

But put your best foot forward,
 or I fear
 That we shall miss the mail : and
 here it comes
 With five at top : as quaint a four-
 in-hand
 As you shall see—three piebalds
 and a roan.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of man-
 kind,
 From scalp to sole one slough and
 crust of sin,
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven,
 scarce meet
 For troops of devils, mad with
 blasphemy,
 I will not cease to grasp the hope
 I hold
 Of saintdom, and to clamour,
 mourn and sob,
 Battering the gates of heaven with
 storms of prayer,
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away
 my sin.
 Let this avail, just, dreadful,
 mighty God,
 This not be all in vain, that thrice
 ten years,
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman
 pangs,
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers
 and cold,
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous
 throes and cramps,
 A sign betwixt the meadow and
 the cloud,
 Patient on this tall pillar I have
 borne
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,
 and sleet, and snow ;
 And I had hoped that ere this
 period closed
 Thou wouldst have caught me up
 into thy rest,
 Denying not these weather-beaten
 limbs
 The meed of saints, the white robe
 and the palm.
 O take the meaning, Lord : I do
 not breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of
 complaint.
 Pain heap'd ten hundredfold to
 this, were still
 Less burthen, by ten hundred-
 fold, to bear,
 Than were those lead-like tons of
 sin, that crush'd
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,
 Thou knowest I bore this better at
 the first,
 For I was strong and hale of body
 then ;
 And tho' my teeth, which now are
 dropt away,
 Would chatter with the cold, and
 all my beard
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the
 moon,
 I drown'd the whoopings of the
 owl with sound
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and
 sometimes saw
 An angel stand and watch me, as I
 sang.
 Now am I feeble grown ; my end
 draws nigh ;
 I hope my end draws nigh : half
 deaf I am,
 So that I scarce can hear the
 people hum
 About the column's base, and
 almost blind,
 And scarce can recognize the
 fields I know ;
 And both my thighs are rotted
 with the dew ;
 Yet cease I not to clamour and to
 cry,
 While my stiff spine can hold my
 weary head,
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal
 from the stone,
 Have mercy, mercy : take away
 my sin.
 O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my
 soul,
 Who may be saved ? who is it may
 be saved ?
 Who may be made a saint, if I fail
 here ?
 Show me the man hath suffer'd
 more than I.

For did not all thy martyrs die
 one death?
 For either they were stoned, or
 crucified,
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil,
 or sawn
 In twain beneath the ribs; but I
 die here
 To-day, and whole years long, a
 life of death.
 Bear witness, if I could have found
 a way
 (And heedfully I sifted all my
 thought)
 More slowly-painful to subdue
 this home
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise
 and hate,
 I had not stinted practice, O my
 God.

For not alone this pillar-punish-
 ment,
 Not this alone I bore: but while
 I lived
 In the white convent down the
 valley there,
 For many weeks about my loins I
 wore
 The rope that haled the buckets
 from the well,
 Twisted as tight as I could knot
 the noose;
 And spake not of it to a single
 soul,
 Until the ulcer, eating thro' my
 skin,
 Betray'd my secret penance, so
 that all
 My brethren marvell'd greatly.
 More than this
 I bore, whereof, O God, thou
 knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul
 might grow to thee,
 I lived up there on yonder moun-
 tain side.
 My right leg chain'd into the crag,
 I lay
 Pent in a roofless close of ragged
 stones;
 Inswathed sometimes in wander-
 ing mist, and twice
 Black'd with thy branding thun-
 der, and sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and
 eating not,
 Except the spare chance-gift of
 those that came
 To touch my body and be heal'd,
 and live:
 And they say then that I work'd
 miracles,
 Whereof my fame is loud amongst
 mankind,
 Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.
 Thou, O God,
 Knowest alone whether this was
 or no.
 Have mercy, mercy; cover all my
 sin.

Then, that I might be more
 alone with thee,
 Three years I lived upon a pillar,
 high
 Six cubits, and three years on one
 of twelve;
 And twice three years I crouch'd
 on one that rose
 Twenty by measure; last of all, I
 grew
 Twice ten long weary weary years
 to this,
 That numbers forty cubits from
 the soil.

I think that I have borne as
 much as this—
 Or else I dream—and for so long
 a time,
 If I may measure time by yon
 slow light,
 And this high dial, which my
 sorrow crowns—
 So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,
 For that the evil ones come here,
 and say,
 'Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast
 suffer'd long
 For ages and for ages!' then they
 prate
 Of penances I cannot have gone
 thro',
 Perplexing me with lies; and oft
 I fall,
 Maybe for months, in such blind
 lethargies,
 That Heaven, and Earth, and
 Time are choked.

But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou
and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and
men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable
roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat
wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even
beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall
of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two
hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and
the Saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I
am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with
crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on
my back ;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift
the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee
till I die :
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a
man I am ;
A sinful man, conceived and born
in sin :
'Tis their own doing ; this is none
of mine ;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame
for this,
That here come those that worship
me ? Ha ! ha !
They think that I am somewhat.
What am I ?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit
and flowers :
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear
witness here)
Have all in all endured as much,
and more
Than many just and holy men,
whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for
saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel
to me.
What is it I can have done to
merit this ?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some
miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd ;
but what of that ?
It may be, no one, even among the
saints,
May match his pains with mine ;
but what of that ?
Yet do not rise : for you may look
on me,
And in your looking you may
kneel to God.
Speak ! is there any of you halt
or maim'd ?
I think you know I have some
power with Heaven
From my long penance : let him
speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power
goes forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah,
hark ! they shout
'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my
soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If
this be,
Can I work miracles and not be
saved ?
This is not told of any. They
were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be
saved ;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,
'Behold a saint !'
And lower voices saint me from
above.
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull
chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and
hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more,
that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crime-
ful record all
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,

The watcher on the column till
 the end;
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sun-
 shine bakes;
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours
 become
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do
 now
 From my high nest of penance
 here proclaim
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my
 side
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the
 coals I lay,
 A vessel full of sin: all hell be-
 neath
 Made me boil over. Devils
 pluck'd my sleeve;
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at
 me.
 I smote them with the cross; they
 swarm'd again.
 In bed like monstrous apes they
 crush'd my chest:
 They flapp'd my light out as I
 read: I saw
 Their faces grow between me and
 my book:
 With colt-like whinny and with
 hoggish whine
 They burst my prayer. Yet this
 way was left,
 And by this way I 'scaped them.
 Mortify
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges
 and with thorns;
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it
 may be, fast
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,
 with slow steps,
 With slow, faint steps, and much
 exceeding pain,
 Have scrambled past those pits of
 fire, that still
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not
 me the praise:
 God only thro' his bounty hath
 thought fit,
 Among the powers and princes of
 this world,
 To make me an example to man-
 kind,
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do
 not say

But that a time may come—yea,
 even now,
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the
 threshold stairs
 Of life—I say, that time is at the
 doors
 When you may worship me with-
 out reproach;
 For I will leave my relics in your
 land,
 And you may carve a shrine about
 my dust
 And burn a fragrant lamp before
 my bones,
 When I am gather'd to the glori-
 ous saints.
 While I spake then, a sting of
 shrewdest pain
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a
 cloudlike change,
 In passing, with a grosser film
 made thick
 These heavy, horny eyes. The
 end! the end!
 Surely the end! What's here? a
 shape, a shade,
 A flash of light. Is that the angel
 there
 That holds a crown? Come,
 blessed brother, come.
 I know thy glittering face. I
 waited long;
 My brows are ready. What! deny
 it now?
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So
 I clutch it. Christ!
 'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the
 crown! the crown!
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to
 me,
 And from it melt the dews of Para-
 dise,
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and
 balm, and frankincense.
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet
 saints: I trust
 That I am whole, and clean, and
 meet for Heaven.
 Speak, if there be a priest, a
 man of God,
 Among you there, and let him
 presently
 Approach, and lean a ladder on
 the shaft,

And climbing up into my airy
home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy
Ghost,

I prophesy that I shall die to night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let
them take
Example, pattern: lead them to
thy light.

THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me
falls;

Once more before my face
I see themoulder'd Abbey walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a
man,
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papis unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagianized a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under
Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'Twere well to question him, and
try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can
discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her
name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by
year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

'Old Summers, when the monk
was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and
pat
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,
And turn'd the cowls adrift:

'And I have seen some score of
those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would
stroll
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in
bud
For puritanic stays:

'And I have shadow'd many a
group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup times of hood and
hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots
gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects
prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is
sick,
Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's
law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the
greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

'I swear by leaf, and wind, and
rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a
shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass :

'For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in
fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch
discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her
name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and sitting
straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled greys.

'But, as for her, she stay'd at
home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to
come,
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half uncut
Upon the rosewood self;
She left the new piano shut :
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the
colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the
holt
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the
wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he
cling
About the darling child :

'But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt
and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me
play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you
made
About my "giant bole";

'And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young
beach
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in
each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as
sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Summer-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch
discern
The roofs of Summer-place !

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart
I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

'O yes, she wander'd round and
round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name
she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its
source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something
coarse,
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy
light,
She glanced across the plain ;
But not a creature was in sight :
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

'And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the
Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may
press
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :

'For ah ! my friend, the days were
brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within
the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and
stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into
one
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for
kiss
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the
bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I
learn
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more : the day was
warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken
eaves.

I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of
life—

The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I
spread,
And shadow'd all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for
me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs
discern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee
blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fate earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee
shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow
rain,
That makes thee broad and
deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may
fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and
rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or
lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honours
that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles
abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead
rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY

OF love that never found his
earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and
breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not
been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round
of time
Still father Truth? O shall the
braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom
work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise,
to law
System and empire? Sin itself be
found
The cloudy porch oft opening on
the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead,
become
Mere highway dust? or year by
year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of
himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed,
were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony
heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with
sapless days,
The long mechanic paces to and
fro,
The set grey life, and apathetic
end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy
love?
O three times less unworthy!
likewise thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater
than thy years.
The Sun will run his orbit, and the
Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself
will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge
changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is
large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some
perfect end.

Will some one say, then why not
ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime?
To that man
My work shall answer, since I
knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as
God,
But then most Godlike being most
a man.
—So let me think 'tis well for thee
and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is
mine
Whose foresight preaches peace,
my heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd
to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro'
half-tears, would dwell
One earnest, earnest moment upon
mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy
low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables,
to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion
in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about
thy neck,

And on thy bosom (deep-desired
relief !)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears,
that weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses and
my soul !

For Love himself took part
against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of
Love—

O this world's curse,—beloved but
hated—came

Like Death betwixt thy dear em-
brace and mine,

And crying, 'Who is this ? behold
thy bride,'

She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to
these—

No, not to thee, but to thyself in
me :

Hard is my doom and thine : thou
knowest it all.

Could Love part thus ? was it
not well to speak,

To have spoken once ? It could
not but be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring
us all things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us
all things ill,

And all good things from evil,
brought the night

In which we sat together and
alone,

And to the want, that hollow'd
all the heart,

Gave utterance by the yearning
of an eye,

That burn'd upon its object thro'
such tears

As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred
times

In that last kiss, which never was
the last,

Farewell, like endless welcome,
lived and died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort,
and the words

That make a man feel strong in
speaking truth ;

Till now the dark was worn, and
overhead

The lights of sunset and of sunrise
mix'd

In that brief night ; the summer
night, that paused

Among her stars to hear us ; stars
that hung

Love-charmed to listen : all the
wheels of Time

Spun round in station, but the
end had come.

O then like those, who clench
their nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual
life—

In one blind cry of passion and
of pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to
death,

Caught up the whole of love and
utter'd it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us,

knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to
will—

Live happy ; tend thy flowers ;
be tended by

My blessing ! Should my Shadow
cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand
it thou

For calmer hours to Memory's
darkest hold,

If not to be forgotten—not at
once—

Not all forgotten. Should it cross
thy dreams,

O might it come like one that looks
content,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the
truth,

And point thee forward to a
distant light,

Or seem to lift a burthen from
my heart

And leave thee freer, till thou
wake refresh'd,

Then when the first low matin-
chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n
her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the
mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and
eastern sea.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these
barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete
and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed,
and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will
drink
Life to the lees: all times I have
enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly,
both with those
That loved me, and alone; on
shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy
Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a
name;
For always roaming with a hungry
heart
Much have I seen and known;
cities of men
And manners, climates, councils,
governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of
them all;
And drunk delight of battle with
my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy
Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch
wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world,
whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make
an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine
in use!

As tho' to breathe were life. Life
piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour
is saved
From that eternal silence, some-
thing more,
A bringer of new things; and vile
it were
For some three suns to store and
hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in
desire
To follow knowledge, like a
sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of
human thought.

This is my son, mine own
Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and
the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to
fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to
make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft
degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the
good.
Most blameless is he, centred in
the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to
fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household
gods,
When I am gone. He works his
work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel
puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas.
My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd and wrought,
and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome
took
The thunder and the sunshine,
and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you
and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and
his toil;

Death closes all : but something
ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet
be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove
with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from
the rocks :
The long day wanes : the slow
moon climbs : the deep
Moans round with many voices.
Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer
world.
Push off, and sitting well in order
smite
The sounding furrows ; for my
purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and
the baths
Of all the western stars, until I
die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash
us down :
It may be we shall touch the
Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom
we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides ;
and tho'
We are not now that strength
which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that
which we are, we are ;
One equal temper of heroic
hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but
strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not
to yield.

LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little,
while as yet 'tis early morn :
Leave me here, and when you
want me, sound upon the
bugle horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it,
as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland
flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance
overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roar-
ing into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied
casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping
slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads,
rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies
tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd,
nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and
the long result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like
a fruitful land reposed ;
When I clung to all the present for
the promise that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as
human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and
all the wonder that would
be——

In the Spring a fuller crimson
comes upon the robin's
breast ;

In the Spring the wanton lapwing
gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes
on the burnish'd dove ;

In the Spring a young man's fancy
lightly turns to thoughts of
love.

Then her cheek was pale and
thinner than should be for one
so young,

And her eyes on all my motions
with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy,
speak, and speak the truth to
me,

Trust me, cousin, all the current
of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead
came a colour and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flush-
ing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken
with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in
the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings,
fearing they should do me
wrong;'

Saying, 'Dost thou love me,
cousin?' weeping, 'I have
loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and
turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken,
ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and
smote on all the chords with
might;

Smote the chord of Self, that,
trembling, pass'd in music out
of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland
did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my
pulses with the fullness of the
Spring.

Many an evening by the waters
did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at
the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O
my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland!
O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms,
falser than all songs have sung
Puppet to a father's threat, and
servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—
having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a
narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower
to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing
coarse to sympathize with
clay.

As the husband is, the wife is:
thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature
will have weight to drag thee
down.

He will hold thee, when his pas-
sion shall have spent its novel
force,

Something better than his dog, a
little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy:
think not they are glazed with
wine.

Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss
him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that
his brain is overwrought:

Soothe him with thy finer fancies,
touch him with thy lighter
thought.

He will answer to the purpose,
easy things to understand—

Better thou wert dead before me,
tho' I slew thee with my
hand!

Better thou and I were lying,
hidden from the heart's dis-
grace,

Roll'd in one another's arms, and
silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that
sin against the strength of
youth!

Cursed be the social lies that warp
us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that
err from honest Nature's
rule!

Cursed be the gold that gilds the
straiten'd forehead of the
fool!

Well—'tis well that I should
bluster!—Hadst thou less
unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved
thee more than ever wife was
loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish
that which bears but bitter
fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom,
tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to
such length of years should
come

As the many-winter'd crow that
leads the clanging rookery
home.

Where is comfort? in division of
the records of the mind?

Can I part her from herself, and
love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd:
sweetly did she speak and
move:

Such a one do I remember, whom
to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and
love her for the love she bore?

No—she never loved me truly:
love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of
devils! this is truth the poet
sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is
remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou
learn it, lest thy heart be put
to proof,

In the dead unhappy night, and
when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams,
and thou art staring at the
wall,

Where the dying night-lamp
flickers, and the shadows rise
and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee,
pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows,
to the tears that thou wilt
weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,'
whisper'd by the phantom
years,

And a song from out the distance
in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking
ancient kindness on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow:
get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee
solace; for a tender voice will
cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip
to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my
latest rival brings thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press
me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father
with a dearness not his due.

Half is thine and half is his: it will
be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted
to thy petty part,

With a little hoard of maxims
preaching down a daughter's
heart.

'They were dangerous guides the
feelings—she herself was not
exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd—
Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy!
wherefore should I care?

I myself must mix with action,
lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to,
lighting upon days like these?

Every door is barr'd with gold,
and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with
suitsors, all the markets over-
flow.

I have but an angry fancy : what
is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, fall-
ing on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in
vapour, and the winds are
laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps
the hurt that Honour feels,
And the nations do but murmur,
snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will
turn that earlier page.

Hide me from my deep emotion,
O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation
that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me,
and the tumult of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement
that the coming years would
yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first
he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky high-
way near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London
flaring like a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to
be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at,
in among the throngs of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the
workers, ever reaping some-
thing new :

That which they have done but
earnest of the things that they
shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as
human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and
all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with com-
merce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight,
dropping down with costly
bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shout-
ing, and there rain'd a ghastly
dew

From the nations' airy navies
grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper
of the south-wind rushing
warm,

With the standards of the peoples
plunging thro' the thunder-
storm ;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no
longer, and the battle-flags
were furl'd

In the Parliament of man, the
Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most
shall hold a fretful realm in
awe,

And the kindly earth shall slum-
ber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion
sweeping thro' me left me
dry,

Left me with the palsied heart,
and left me with the jaun-
diced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all
things here are out of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly
creeping on from point to
point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as
a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks
behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one
increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are
widen'd with the process of
the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not
harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence
beat for ever like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom
lingers, and I linger on the
shore,
And the individual withers, and
the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom
lingers, and he bears a laden
breast,
Full of sad experience, moving
toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me,
sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion
were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp
on such a moulder'd string ?
I am shamed thro' all my nature
to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weak-
ness ! woman's pleasure,
woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions
bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all
thy passions, match'd with
mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight,
and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sick-
ens, nothing. Ah, for some
retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient,
where my life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell
my father evil-starr'd ;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and
a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—
there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the
gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning,
mellow moons and happy
skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms
in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never
floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous wood-
land, swings the trailer from
the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bow-
er, hangs the heavy-fruited
tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in
dark-purpled spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoy-
ment more than in this march
of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway,
in the thoughts that shake
mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no
longer shall have scope and
breathing space ;
I will take some savage woman,
she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they
shall dive, and they shall
run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair,
and hurl their lances in the
sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and
leap the rainbows of the
brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring
over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy !
but I *know* my words are
wild,
But I count the grey barbarian
lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads,
vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures,
like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—
what to me were sun or
clime?

I the heir of all the ages, in the
foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men
should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at
gaze like Joshua's moon in
Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons.
Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin for ever
down the ringing grooves of
change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we
sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than
a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew
not) help me as when life
began:

Rift the hills, and roll the waters,
flash the lightnings, weigh the
Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my
spirit hath not set.

Ancient founts of inspiration well
thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long
farewell to Locksley Hall!

Now for me the woods may wither,
now for me the roof-tree
fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin,
blackening over heath and
holt,

Cramming all the blast before it,
in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with
rain or hail, or fire or
snow;

For the mighty wind arises, roar-
ing seaward, and I go.

GODIVA

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on
the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and
there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into
this:—*

Not only we, the latest seed of
Time,
New men, that in the flying of a
wheel
Cry down the past, not only we,
that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved
the people well,
And loathed to see them over-
tax'd; but she
Did more, and underwent, and
overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers
back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl,
who ruled
In Coventry: for when he laid a
tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought
Their children, clamouring, 'If we
pay, we starve!'
She sought her lord, and found
him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs,
alone,
His beard a foot before him, and
his hair
A yard behind. She told him of
their tears,
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this
tax, they starve.'
Whereat he stared, replying, half-
amazed,
'You would not let your little
finger ache
For such as *these*?—' 'But I would
die,' said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter
and by Paul:
Then fillip'd at the diamond in
her ear;
'O ay, ay, ay, you talk!—
'Alas!' she said,

'But prove me what it is I would
not do.'
And from a heart as rough as
Esau's hand,
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked
thro' the town,
And I repeal it;' and nodding,
as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides
among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of
her mind,
As winds from all the compass
shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an
hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald
forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of
trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she
would loose
The people: therefore, as they
loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should
pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing;
but that all
Should keep within, door shut,
and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost
bower, and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of
her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a
breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer
moon
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she
shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets
to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown
the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping
sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she
reach'd
The gateway; there she found her
palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial
gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on
with chastity:
The deep air listen'd round her
as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly
breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads
upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see: the
barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her
palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses:
the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes;
and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared:
but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last,
she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket
from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archways
in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on
with chastity:
And one low churl, compact of
thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to
come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they
had their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in
his head,
And dropt before him. So the
Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense
misused;
And she, that knew not, pass'd:
and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound,
the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from
a hundred towers,
One after one: but even then she
gain'd
Her bower; whence reissuing,
robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the
tax away,
And built herself an everlasting
name.

THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
 'Thou art so full of misery,
 Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I
 said:

'Let me not cast in endless shade
 What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply:
 'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
 Come from the wells where he did
 lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil
 Of his old husk: from head to tail
 Came out clear plates of sapphire
 mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze
 they grew:
 Thro' crofts and pastures wet with
 dew
 A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began
 Young Nature thro' five cycles
 ran,
 And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
 Proportion, and, above the rest,
 Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied:
 'Self-blinded are you by your
 pride:
 Look up thro' night: the world
 is wide.

'This truth within thy mind
 rehearse,
 That in a boundless universe
 Is boundless better, boundless
 worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes
 and fears
 Could find no statelier than his
 peers
 In yonder hundred million
 spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
 'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the
 wind,
 Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
 'No compound of this earthly ball
 Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly:
 'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency?'

'Or will one beam be less intense,
 When thy peculiar difference
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst
 not know,'
 But my full heart, that work'd
 below,
 Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
 'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
 Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee
 sleep,
 Nor any train of reason keep:
 Thou canst not think, but thou
 wilt weep.'

I said, 'The years with change
 advance:
 If I make dark my countenance,
 I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might
 take,
 Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug
 can make
 A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know
 That all about the thorn will blow
 In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of
 thought
 Still moving after truth long
 sought,
 Will learn new things when I am
 not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some
time,
Sooner or later, will grey prime
Make thy grass hoar with early
rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn
for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day
and night.

'Not less the bee would range her
cells,
The furzy prickles fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled
bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine
hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human
power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he
said,
'Still sees the sacred morning
spread
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still
remain,
Just breaking over land and main?'

'Or make that morn, from his
cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and
town?'

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and
let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd
not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

'Twere better not to breathe or
speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining
weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought
resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will
say,
Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
'To breathe and loathe, to live and
sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to
die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so
bound
To men, that how thy name may
sound
Will vex thee lying underground?'

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-
sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with
dust,
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I
cried,
'From emptiness and the waste
wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!'

'Nay—rather yet that I could
raise
One hope that warm'd me in the
days
While still I yearn'd for human
praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of
tongue,
Among the tents I paused and
sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without
fear
The brand, the buckler, and the
spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and
love—

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb
about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of
awe,
And reach the law within the law :

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous
seed,
Fruitful of further thought and
deed,

'To pass, when Life her light
withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine
own,
To perish, wept for, honour'd,
known,
And like a warrior overthrown ;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious
tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he
hears
His country's war-song thrill his
ears :

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is
broke,
And all the war is roll'd in
smoke.'

'Yea !' said the voice, 'thy dream
was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an
hour ?

'Then comes the check, the change,
the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring
pain,
Link'd month to month with such
a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death
and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely
play'd,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to
grade ;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and
blind,
Named man, may hope some truth
to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the
moon
Draws different threads, and late
and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not : either Truth is
born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb : the sum-
mits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of
hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base
to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of
pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou
dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and
poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and
brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness
crawl ?
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

'I know that age to age suc-
ceeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and
deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have
striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was
given
The joy that mixes man with
Heaven :

'Who, rowing hard against the
stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a
dream ;

'But heard, by secret transport
led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-
head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire.
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and
bruised with stones :

'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the
face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
'Not that the grounds of hope
were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

'Or that this anguish fleeting
hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

'For I go, weak from suffering
here :
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since
hath died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or
pride ?

'Will he obey when one com-
mands ?
Or answer should one press his
hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his
breast :

There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and
meek :

Tho' one should smite him on the
cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not
speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet
face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his
name,
Some grow to honour, some to
shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north wind
rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter
crave
From winter rains that beat his
grave.

'High up the vapours fold and
swim :
About him broods the twilight
dim :
The place he knew forgetteth
him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I
said,

'These things are wrapt in doubt
and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are
dead.

'The sap dries up : the plant
declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death ? the outward
signs ?

'I found him when my years were
few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow
crept :

In her still place the morning
wept :

Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his
head :

"Omegal thou art Lord," they said,
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught
by these,
Not make him sure that he shall
cease ?

'Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the
sense ?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly
Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter
checks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with some-
thing good,
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms
yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and with-
drawn.

'Ah! sure within him and with-
out,
Could his dark wisdom find it
out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

'But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou
slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not
solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which
I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father
play'd
In his free field, and pastime
made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they called him
then.
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

'Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and
ran
Their course, till thou wert also
man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his
race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his
face,
Whose troubles number with his
days:

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his
birth
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the
rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou might'st
defend
The thesis which thy words in-
tend—
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain
hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter
plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in-
vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might
await
The slipping thro' from state to
state.

'As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens
then,
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were
such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet
and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

'Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps
of night.

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory :

'For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime ?

'Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,'
said he,
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast miss'd
thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new ?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measur'd footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle,
good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbour-
hood,
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it
makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my
side :

'What is it thou knowest, sweet
voice ?' I cried.

'A hidden hope,' the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that
hour

From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can
prove,

That every cloud, that spreads
above

And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for
flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with
song,

There seem'd no room for sense
of wrong.

So variously seem'd all things
wrought,

I marvell'd how the mind was
brought

To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made
choice

To commune with that barren
voice,

Than him that said, 'Rejoice !
rejoice !'

THE DAY-DREAM

PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :

A pleasant hour has past
away

While, dreaming on your damask
cheek,

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward
moods

To see you dreaming—and, be-
hind,

A summer crisp with shining
woods.

And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding
warm,

The reflex of a legend past,

And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought
I had,

And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and
add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your
face,

Nor look with that too-earnest
eye—

The rhymes are dazzled from their
place,

And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

THE varying year with blade and
sheaf

Clothes and reclothes the happy
plains ;

Here rests the sap within the
leaf,

Here stays the blood along the
veins.

Faint shadows, vapours lightly
curl'd,

Faint murmurs from the mea-
dows come,

Like hints and echoes of the
world

To spirits folded in the
womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake with-
drawn.

Here droops the banner on the
tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal
fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their
eggs:

In these, in those the life is
stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is
made,

Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old
kings,

That watch the sleepers from
the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd;
and there

The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honour blooming
fair:

The page has caught her hand in
his:

Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her
cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel
shine,

Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble
wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial
king.

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and
shows

At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistle-
toes,

And grapes with bunches red
as blood;

All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake
and brier,

And glimpsing over these, just
seen,

High up, the topmost palace
spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers
die,

And thought and time be born
again,

And newer knowledge, drawing
nigh,

Bring truth that sways the soul
of men?

Here all things in their place
remain,

As all were order'd, ages since.

Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope
and Pain,

And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,

Across the purpled coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has
grown,

On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid
of pearl:

The slumbrous light is rich and
warm,

And moves not on the rounded
curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets down-
ward roll'd,

Glows forth each softly-shadow'd
arm
With bracelets of the diamond
bright :
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with
light.

III

She sleeps : her breathings are not
heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed
heart.
She sleeps : on either hand up-
swells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly
prest :
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever
dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL

I

ALL precious things, discover'd
late,
To those that seek them issue
forth ;
For love in sequel works with
fate,
And draws the veil from hidden
worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the
rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to
pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the
grass.
He gazes on the silent dead :
'They perish'd in their daring
deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his
head,
'The many fail : the one suc-
ceeds.'

III

He comes, scarce knowing what he
seeks :
He breaks the hedge : he enters
there :
The colour flies into his cheeks :
He trusts to light on something
fair ;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his
walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps
wind ;
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he
find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his
knee.
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes
must be !'

THE REVIVAL

I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was
snapt.
There rose a noise of striking
clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that
clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing
cocks ;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden
swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain
leapt.

II

The hedge broke in, the banner
blew,
The butler drank, the steward
scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the pea-
cock squall'd,

The maid and page renew'd their
 strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd
 and clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of
 life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king
 awoke,
 And in his chair himself up-
 rear'd,
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face,
 and spoke,
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!
 How say you? we have slept, my
 lords.
 My beard has grown into my
 lap.'
 The barons swore, with many
 words,
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but
 still
 My joints are something stiff
 or so.
 My lord, and shall we pass the
 bill
 I mention'd half an hour ago?'
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 In courteous words return'd re-
 ply:
 But dallied with his golden chain,
 And, smiling, put the ques-
 tion by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

AND on her lover's arm she
 leant,
 And round her waist she felt it
 fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the
 old:
 Across the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 And deep into the dying day
 The happy princess follow'd
 him.

II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
 O love, for such another kiss;'
 'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,
 'O love, 'twas such as this and
 this.'
 And o'er them many a sliding star,
 And many a merry wind was
 borne,
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden
 bar,
 The twilight melted into morn.

III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
 'O happy sleep, that lightly
 fled!'
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy
 sleep!'
 'O love, thy kiss would wake
 the dead!'
 And o'er them many a flowing
 range
 Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-
 bark,
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy
 change,
 The twilight died into the dark.

IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?
 And whither goest thou, tell me
 where?'
 'O seek my father's court with me,
 For there are greater wonders
 there.'
 And o'er the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 Beyond the night, across the day,
 Thro' all the world she follow'd
 him.

MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find no moral there,
 Go, look in any glass and say,
 What moral is in being fair.
 Oh, to what uses shall we put
 The wildweed-flower that sim-
 ply blows?
 And is there any moral shut
 Within the bosom of the rose?

II

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may
 find,
 According as his humours lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest
 friend;
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful
 end.

L'ENVOI

I

You shake your head. A random
 string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's
 friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of
 men;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep
 again;
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty
 wars,
 And wake on science grown to
 more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all that else the years will
 show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger
 hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the
 Powers;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes;
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
 Thro' sunny decads new and
 strange,
 Or gay quinquenniads would we
 reap
 The flower and quintessence of
 change.

III

Ah, yet would I—and would I
 might!
 So much your eyes my fancy
 take—
 Be still the first to leap to light
 That I might kiss those eyes
 awake!
 For, am I right or am I wrong,
 To choose your own you did not
 care;
 You'd have *my* moral from the
 song,
 And I will take my pleasures
 there:
 And, am I right or am I wrong,
 My fancy, ranging thro' and
 thro',
 To search a meaning for the song,
 Perforce will still revert to you;
 Nor finds a closer truth than this
 All-graceful head, so richly
 curl'd,
 And evermore a costly kiss
 The prelude to some brighter
 world.

IV

For since the time when Adam
 first
 Embraced his Eve in happy
 hour,
 And every bird of Eden burst
 In carol, every bud to flower,
 What eyes, like thine, have
 waken'd hopes?
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly
 join'd?
 Where on the double rosebud
 droops
 The fullness of the pensive
 mind;
 Which all too dearly self-involved,
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep too
 me;
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,
 That lets thee neither hear nor
 see:
 But break it. In the name of wife,
 And in the rights that name may
 give,
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
 And that for which I care too
 live.

EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And, if you find a meaning
 there,
 O whisper to your glass, and say,
 'What wonder, if he thinks me
 fair ?'
 What wonder I was all unwise,
 To shape the song for your
 delight
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,
 That float thro' Heaven, and
 cannot light ?
 Or old-world trains, upheld at
 court
 By Cupid-boys of blooming
 hue—
 But take it—earnest wed with
 sport,
 And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION

My father left a park to me,
 But it is wild and barren,
 A garden too with scarce a tree
 And waster than a warren :
 Yet say the neighbours when they
 call,
 It is not bad but good land,
 And in it is the germ of all
 That grows within the wood-
 land.

O had I lived when song was great
 In days of old Amphion,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 Nor cared for seed or scion !
 And had I lived when song was
 great,
 And legs of trees were limber,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
 Such happy intonation,
 Wherever he sat down and sung
 He left a small plantation ;
 Wherever in a lonely grove
 He set up his forlorn pipes,
 The gouty oak began to move,
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy
 crown,
 And, as tradition teaches,
 Young ashes pirouetted down
 Coquetting with young beeches ;
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
 Ran forward to his rhyming,
 And from the valleys underneath
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and
 rent
 The woodbine wreaths that bind
 her,
 And down the middle, buzz ! she
 went
 With all her bees behind her :
 The poplars, in long order due,
 With cypress promenaded,
 The shock-head willows two and
 two
 By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the
 wave,
 Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the
 grave,
 Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
 Old elms came breaking from the
 vine,
 The vine stream'd out to follow,
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the
 pine
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
 When, ere his song was ended,
 Like some great landslip, tree by
 tree,
 The country-side descended ;
 And shepherds from the mountain
 eaves
 Look'd down, half-pleased, half-
 frighten'd,
 As dash'd about the drunken
 leaves
 The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men
 And wanton without measure ;
 So youthful and so flexible then,
 You moved her at your plea-
 sure.

Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !

And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set
sprigs,
And scirrhou roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle ;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle ;
Or at the most, when three-parts
sick
With strumming and with scra-
ping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading :
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's
ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro'
there,
And Methods of transplanting
trees,
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they
prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that
grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ;
Half-conscious of the gardensquirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of
toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.

I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom :
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent roof the
snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapour
goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent tower
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping
hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and
clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and
dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord !
and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, Thy bride, a glittering
star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom
waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques
of men,

My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of
ten,

Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth
high,

The hard brands shiver on the
steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack
and fly,

The horse and rider reel ;
They reel, they roll in clanging
lists,

And when the tide of combat
stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in
showers,
That lightly rain from ladies'
hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies
bend

On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and
thrall :

But all my heart is drawn
above,

My knees are bow'd in crypt and
shrine :

I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.

More bounteous aspects on me
beam,

Me mightier transports move
and thrill ;

So keep I fair thro' faith and
prayer

A virgin heart in work and
will.

When down the stormy crescent
goes,

A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest
glows,

I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;

I hear a voice, but none are
there ;

The stalls are void, the doors are
wide,

The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-
cloth,

The silver vessels sparkle
clean,

The shrill bell rings, the censer
swings,

And solemn chaunts resound
between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain
meres

I find a magic bark ;
I leap on board : no helmsman
steers :

I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light !

Three angels bear the Holy
Grail :

With folded feet, in stoles of
white,

On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of
God !

My spirit beats her mortal
bars,

As down dark tides the glory
slides

And star-like mingles with the
stars.

When on my goodly charger
borne

Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas
morn,

The streets are dumb with
snow.

The tempest crackles on the
leads,

And, ringing, springs from brand
and mail ;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.

I leave the plain, I climb the
height ;

No branchy thicket shelter
yields ;

But blessed forms in whistling
storms

Fly o'er waste fens and windy
fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of
 heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease,
 Pure spaces clothed in living
 beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odours haunt my
 dreams;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear,
 This weight and size, this heart
 and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest
 air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses
 nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover
 clear:
 'O just and faithful knight of
 God!
 Ride on! the prize is near.'
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
 By bridge and ford, by park and
 pale,
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder
 town
 Met me walking on yonder
 way,
 'And have you lost your heart?'
 she said;
 'And are you married yet,
 Edward Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to
 me:
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
 'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no
 more
 Can touch the heart of Edward
 Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,
 Against her father's and
 mother's will:
 To-day I sat for an hour and
 wept,
 By Ellen's grave, on the windy
 hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her
 cold;
 Thought her proud, and fled
 over the sea;
 Fill'd I was with folly and
 spite,
 When Ellen Adair was dying for
 me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!
 Cruelly came they back to-
 day:
 "You're too slight and fickle," I
 said,
 "To trouble the heart of Edward
 Gray."

'There I put my face in the
 grass—
 Whisper'd, "Listen to my de-
 spair:
 I repent me of all I did:
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,
 "Here lies the body of Ellen
 Adair;
 And here the heart of Edward
 Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may
 go,
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to
 tree;
 But I will love no more, no more,
 Till Ellen Adair come back to
 me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone:
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd
 away:
 There lies the body of Ellen
 Adair!
 And there the heart of Edward
 Gray!'

WILL WATERPROOF'S
LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five
o'clock.

Go fetch a pint of port :
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew
fat

On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random
rhymes,

Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to
make

New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.

Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the
man's

Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer
suns.

By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and
sense,

Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and
cry

For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or
dry,

And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their
blood ;

There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are
grapes ;

If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and
shapes,

Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffis be rife in prose and
rhyme,

We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time

We circle with the seasons.
This earth is rich in man and maid ;
With fair horizons bound :
This whole wide earth of light and
shade

Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple Bar,
And, set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the
guest

Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the
best

That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place ?
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
 Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
 Which bears a season'd brain
 about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and
 out,
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
 With many kinsmen gay,
 Where long and largely we
 carouse
 As who shall say me nay :
 Each month, a birthday coming
 on,
 We drink defying trouble,
 Or sometimes two would meet in
 one,
 And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
 Had relish fiery-new,
 Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
 As old as Waterloo ;
 Or stow'd (when classic Canning
 died)
 In musty bins and chambers,
 Had cast upon its crusty side
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
 She answer'd to my call,
 She changes with that mood or
 this,
 Is all-in-all to all :
 She lit the spark within my
 throat,
 To make my blood run quicker,
 Used all her fiery will, and smote
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
 The waiter's hands, that reach
 To each his perfect pint of stout,
 His proper chop to each.
 He looks not like the common
 breed
 That with the napkin dally ;
 I think he came like Ganymede,
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
 Than modern poultry drop,
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,
 And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
 Crow'd lustier late and early,
 Sipt wine from silver, praising
 God,
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
 Till in a court he saw
 A something-pottle-bodied boy,
 That knuckled at the taw :
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him,
 fair and good,
 Flew over roof and casement :
 His brothers of the weather stood
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and
 spire,
 And follow'd with acclaims,
 A sign to many a staring shire,
 Came crowing over Thames.
 Right down by smoky Paul's they
 bore,
 Till, where the street grows
 straiter,
 One fix'd for ever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks !
 'Tis but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than
 common ;
 As just and mere a serving-man
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me
 down
 Into the common day ?
 Is it the weight of that half-
 crown,
 Which I shall have to pay ?
 For, something duller than at
 first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit (my empty glass reversed),
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,

I take myself to task;
Lest of the fullness of my life
I leave an empty flask:
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet;
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is grey before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup:
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slept
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more;
With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters;
The tavern hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow:
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches;
Three days, that deal in ana,
swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should pass:
With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes:
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt
cease

To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous
lease

Of life, shalt earn no more;
No carved cross-bones, the types
of Death,

Shall show thee past to Heaven:
But carved cross-pipes, and, under-
neath,

A pint pot, neatly graven.

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in
air,

Lord Ronald brought a lily-white
doe

To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long - betroth'd were
they:

They two will wed the morrow
morn:

God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my
birth,

Nor for my lands so broad and
fair;

He loves me for my own true
worth,

And that is well,' said Lady
Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, 'Who was this that went
from thee?'

It was my cousin,' said Lady
Clare,

'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice
the nurse,

'That all comes round so just
and fair:

Lord Ronald is heir of all your
lands,

And you are not the Lady
Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my
nurse, my nurse?'

Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak
so wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the
nurse,

'I speak the truth: you are my
child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at
my breast;

I speak the truth, as I live by
bread!

I buried her like my own sweet
child,

And put my child in her stead.

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,' she said, 'if this be
true,

To keep the best man under the
sun

So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice
the nurse,

'But keep the secret for your
life,

And all you have will be Lord
Ronald's,

When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
'I will speak out, for I dare not
lie.

Pull off, pull off, the brooch of
gold,

And fling the diamond necklace
by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice
the nurse,

'But keep the secret all ye
can.'

She said 'Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice
the nurse,

'The man will cleave unto his
right.'

'And he shall have it,' the lady
replied,

'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'

'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,

'So strange it seems to me.

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,

My mother dear, if this be so,

And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,

She was no longer Lady Clare :

She went by dale, and she went by
down,

With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald
had brought

Leapt up from where she lay,

Dropt her head in the maiden's
hand,

And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his
tower :

'O Lady Clare, you shame your
worth !

Why come you drest like a village
maid,

That are the flower of the
earth ?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are :

I am a beggar born,' she said,

'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord
Ronald,

'For I am yours in word and in
deed ;

Play me no tricks,' said Lord
Ronald,

'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up !

Her heart within her did not
fail :

She look'd into Lord Ronald's
eyes,

And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry
scorn :

He turn'd and kiss'd her where
she stood :

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the next in
blood—

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady
Clare.'

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,

'If my heart by signs can tell,

Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well.'

She replies in accents fainter,

'There is none I love like thee.'

He is but a landscape painter,

And a village maiden she.

He to lips, that fondly falter,

Presses his without reproof :

Leads her to the village altar,

And they leave her father's
roof.

'I can make no marriage present :
Little can I give my wife.

Love will make our cottage plea-
sant,

And I love thee more than life.'

They by parks and lodges going

See the lordly castles stand :

Summer woods, about them blow-
ing,

Made a murmur in the land.

From deep thought himself he
rouses,

Says to her that loves him well,

'Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'

So she goes by him attended,

Hears him lovingly converse,

Sees whatever fair and splendid

Lay betwixt his home and hers ;

Parks with oak and chestnut
shady,

Parks and order'd gardens great,

Ancient homes of lord and lady,

Built for pleasure and for state.

All he shows her makes him
dearer :

Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend
their days.

O but she will love him truly !
He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they
come.

Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns ;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before :
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep
firmer,

Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders
blindly,

Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and
kindly,

‘ All of this is mine and thine.’
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.

All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to
chin :

As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.

Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove :
But he clasp’d her like a lover,
And he cheer’d her soul with
love.

So she strove against her weak-
ness,

Tho’ at times her spirit sank :
Shaped her heart with woman’s
meekness

To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.

But a trouble weigh’d upon her,
And perplex’d her, night and
morn,

With the burthen of an honour
Unto which she was not born.

Faint she grew, and ever fainter
As she murmur’d, ‘ Oh, that
he

Were once more that landscape
painter,

Which did win my heart from
me !’

So she droop’d and droop’d before
him,

Fading slowly from his side :

Three fair children first she bore
him,

Then before her time she died
Weeping, weeping late and early,

Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn’d the Lord of Bur-
leigh,

Burleigh-house by Stamford
town.

And he came to look upon her,
And he look’d at her and said,

‘ Bring the dress and put it on
her,

That she wore when she was
wed.’

Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest

In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and
pain,

With tears and smiles from heaven
again

The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere.
Blue isles of heaven laugh’d
between,

And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather’d
green

From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :

Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :

Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,

Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound

In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut - buds began

To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,

Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore

Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,

Now by some tinkling rivulet,

In mosses mixt with violet

Her cream-white mule his pastern set :

And fleetier now she skimm'd the plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs

By night to eery warblings,

When all the glimmering moorland rings

With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade

The happy winds upon her play'd,

Blowing the ringlet from the braid :

She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd

The rein with dainty finger-tips,

A man had given all other bliss,

And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss

Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,

Thy tribute wave deliver :

No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,

A rivulet then a river :

Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,

For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,

And here thine aspen shiver ;

And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,

A thousand moons will quiver ;

But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;

She was more fair than words can say :

Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.

In robe and crown the king stopt down,

To meet and greet her on her way ;

'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,

She in her poor attire was seen :

One praised her ankles, one her eyes,

One her dark hair and lovesome mien.

So sweet a face, such angel grace,

In all that land had never been :

Cophetua sware a royal oath :

'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

THE VISION OF SIN

I

I HAD a vision when the night was late :
 A youth came riding toward a palace gate.
 He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.
 And from the palace came a child of sin,
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,
 Expecting when a fountain should arise :
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
 Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
 Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
 Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
 Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
 Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;
 Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
 Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,

Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;
 Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
 As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
 The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and palpitated ;
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
 Flung the torrent rainbow round ;
 Then they started from their places,
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,
 Half invisible to the view,
 Wheeling with precipitate paces
 To the melody, till they flew,
 Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,
 Dash'd together in blinding dew :
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
 The nerve-dissolving melody
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain tract,
 That girt the region with high cliffs and lawn :
 I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
 Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
 From those still heights, and slowly drawing near,
 A vapour heavy, hueless, formless cold,
 Came floating on for many a month and year,

Unheeded : and I thought I would
 have spoken,
 And warn'd that madman ere it
 grew too late :
 But, as in dreams, I could not.
 Mine was broken,
 When that cold vapour touch'd
 the palace gate,
 And link'd again. I saw within
 my head
 A grey and gap-tooth'd man as
 lean as death,
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd
 heath,
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and
 said :

IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
 Here is custom come your way ;
 Take my brute, and lead him in,
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
 See that sheets are on my bed ;
 What ! the flower of life is past :
 It is long before you wed.

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
 At the Dragon on the heath !
 Let us have a quiet hour,
 Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink ;
 Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
 I remember, when I think,
 That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
 When a blanket wraps the day,
 When the rotten woodland drips,
 And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,
 Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
 What care I for any name ?
 What for order or degree ?

'Let me screw thee up a peg :
 Let me loose thy tongue with
 wine :
 Callest thou that thing a leg ?
 Which is thinnest ? thine or
 mine ?

'Thou shalt not be saved by
 works :

Thou hast been a sinner too :
 Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
 Empty scarecrows, I and you !

'Fill the cup, and fill the can :
 Have a rouse before the morn :
 Every moment dies a man,
 Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood ;
 Therefore comes it we are wise.
 Fish are we that love the mud,
 Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame ! to fly sublime
 Thro' the courts, the camps, the
 schools,
 Is to be the ball of Time,
 Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship !—to be two in one—
 Let the canting liar pack !
 Well I know, when I am gone,
 How she mouths behind my
 back.

'Virtue !—to be good and just—
 Every heart, when sifted well,
 Is a clot of warmer dust,
 Mix'd with cunning sparks of
 hell.

'O ! we two as well can look
 Whited thought and cleanly life
 As the priest, above his book
 Leering at his neighbour's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can :
 Have a rouse before the morn :
 Every moment dies a man,
 Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave :
 They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
 Rising, falling, like a wave,
 For they know not what they
 mean.

'He that roars for liberty
 Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
 And the tyrant's cruel glee
 Forces on the freer hour.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go ! her thirst she
slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect state :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

'Chant me now some wicked
stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy
tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could under-
stand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in
hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Trooping from their mouldy den
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty
heads !

'You are bones, and what o
that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones

'No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workman-
ship.

'Lo ! God's likeness—the ground
plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, or
framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch o
man,
Far too naked to be shamed !

'Drink to Fortune, drink to
Chance,
While we keep a little breath !
Drink to heavy Ignorance !
Hob - and - nob with brethren
Death !

'Thou art mazed, the night is
long,
And the longer night is near :
What ! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and
curl'd ;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can !
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

V

The voice grew faint : there came
 a further change :
 Once more uprose the mystic
 mountain range :
 Below were men and horses pierced
 with worms,
 And slowly quickening into lower
 forms ;
 By shards and scurf of salt, and
 scum of dross,
 Old splash of rains, and refuse
 patch'd with moss.
 Then some one spake : 'Behold !
 it was a crime
 Of sense avenged by sense that
 wore with time.'
 Another said : 'The crime of
 sense became
 The crime of malice, and is equal
 blame.'
 And one : 'He had not wholly
 quench'd his power ;
 A little grain of conscience made
 him sour.'
 At last I heard a voice upon the
 slope
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any
 hope ?'
 To which an answer peal'd from
 that high land,
 But in a tongue no man could
 understand ;
 And on the glimmering limit far
 withdrawn
 God made himself an awful rose
 of dawn.

MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH

Move eastward, happy earth, and
 leave
 Yon orange sunset waning slow :
 From fringes of the faded eve,
 O, happy planet, eastward go ;
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow
 Thy silver sister - world, and
 rise
 To glass herself in dewy eyes
 That watch me from the glen
 below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly
 borne,
 Dip forward under starry light,
 And move me to my marriage
 morn,
 And round again to happy night.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

BREAK, break, break,
 On thy cold grey stones, O Sea !
 And I would that my tongue could
 utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister
 at play !
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on
 the bay !

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill ;
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd
 hand,
 And the sound of a voice that
 is still !

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
 But the tender grace of a day that
 is dead
 Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
 He pass'd by the town and out
 of the street,
 A light wind blew from the gates
 of the sun,
 And waves of shadow went over
 the wheat,
 And he sat him down in a lonely
 place,
 And chanted a melody loud and
 sweet,
 That made the wild swan pause in
 her cloud,
 And the lark drop down at his
 feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted
the bee,
The snake slipt under a
spray,
The wild hawk stood with the
down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the
prey,
And the nightingale thought, 'I
have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will
be
When the years have died
away.

THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song
which Leonard wrote :
It was last summer on a tour in
Wales :
Old James was with me : we that
day had been
Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for
Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis : then
we crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd
half way up
The counter side ; and that same
song of his
He told me ; for I banter'd him,
and swore
They said he lived shut up within
himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous
days,
That, setting the *how much* before
the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the
horseleech, 'Give,
Cram us with all,' but count not
me the herd !

To which 'They call me what
they will,' he said :
'But I was born too late : the fair
new forms,
That float about the threshold of
an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to
be caught—

Catch me who can, and make the
catcher crown'd—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it
be.
But if you care indeed to listen,
hear
These measured words, my work
of yestermorn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep,
but all things move ;
The Sun flies forward to his
brother Sun ;
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in
her ellipse ;
And human things returning on
themselves
Move onward, leading up the
golden year.

'Ah, tho' the times, when some
new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when
they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the
shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning
their march,
And slow and sure comes up the
golden year.

'When wealth no more shall rest
in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall
slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower
lands,
And light shall spread, and man
be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden
year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles ?
wrens be wrens ?
If all the world were falcons, what
of that ?
The wonder of the eagle were the
less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy
days
Roll onward, leading up the golden
year.

'Fly, happy happy sails and
bear the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the
Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing
havenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices,
clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden
year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when
shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal
Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the
land,
And like a lane of beams athwart
the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden
year?'

Thus far he flow'd, and ended;
whereupon
'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence
answer'd James—
Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our
children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us
that live;
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes
on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden
year.'

With that he struck his staff
against the rocks
And broke it,—James,—you know
him,—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon
his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter
woods,
O'erflourish'd with the hoary
clematis:
Then added, all in heat:
'What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy
season back,—
The more fools they,—we forward:
dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when
every hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to
the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the
seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should
not plunge
His hand into the bag: but well
I know
That unto him who works, and
feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the
doors.'

He spoke; and, high above, I
heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the
great echo flap
And buffet round the hills from
bluff to bluff.

AFTER-THOUGHT

AH, God! the petty fools of
rhyme,
That shriek and sweat in pigmy
wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent
stars;—

That hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite,
That pinch their brothers in the
throng,
And scratch the very dead for
spite;—

And strain to make an inch of
room
For their sweet selves, and
cannot hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs, and all
things here.

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer Godlike
state,
Than if the crowded Orb should
cry
Like those that cried Diana
great:

And I too talk, and lose the touch
 I talk of. Surely, after all,
 The noblest answer unto such
 Is kindly silence when they
 brawl.

TO—

AFTER READING A LIFE AND
 LETTERS

‘Cursed be he that moves my bones.’
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

YOU might have won the Poet's
 name,
 If such be worth the winning
 now,
 And gain'd a laurel for your
 brow
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim;
 But you have made the wiser
 choice,
 A life that moves to gracious
 ends
 Thro' troops of unrecording
 friends,
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent
 doom
 Of those that wear the Poet's
 crown :
 Hereafter, neither knave nor
 clown
 Shall hold their orgies at your
 tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
 Nor leave his music as of old,
 But round him ere he scarce be
 cold
 Begins the scandal and the cry :

‘Proclaim the faults he would not
 show :
 Break lock and seal : betray the
 trust :
 Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but
 just
 The many-headed beast should
 know.’

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing
 A song that pleased us from its
 worth ;
 No public life was his on earth,
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor
 king.

He gave the people of his best :
 His worst he kept, his best he
 gave.
 My Shakespeare's curse on
 clown and knave
 Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to
 be
 The little life of bank and brier,
 The bird that pipes his lone
 desire
 And dies unheard within his tree,
 Than he that warbles long and
 loud
 And drops at Glory's temple-
 gates,
 For whom the carrion-vulture
 waits
 To tear his heart before the crowd !

TO THE QUEEN

REVERED, beloved—O you that
 hold
 A nobler office upon earth
 Than arms, or power of brain,
 or birth
 Could give the warrior kings of
 old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
 To one of less desert allows
 This laurel greener from the
 brows
 Of him that utter'd nothing
 base ;

And should your greatness, and
 the care
 That yokes with empire, yield
 you time
 To make demand of modern
 rhyme
 If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then—while a sweeter music
wakes,
And thro' wild March the
throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-
walls
The sun - lit almond - blossom
shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of
song;
For tho' the faults were thick
as dust
In vacant chambers, I could
trust
Your kindness. May you rule us
long,

And leave us rulers of your
blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children
say,
She wrought her people lasting
good;

'Her court was pure; her life
serene;
God gave her peace; her land
reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence
closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and
Queen;

'And statesmen at her council
met
Who knew the seasons when to
take
Occasion by the hand, and
make
The bounds of freedom wider
yet

'By shaping some august de-
cree,
Which kept her throne unshaken
still,
Broad-based upon her people's
will,
And compass'd by the inviolate
sea.'

EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the
lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quar-
ters of a year
My one Oasis in the dust and
drouth
Of city life! I was a sketcher
then:
See here, my doing: curves of
mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle,
built
When men knew how to build,
upon a rock,
With turrets lichen-gilded like a
rock:
And here, new-comers in an an-
cient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey,
millionaires,
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-
chimnied bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by
the lake
With Edwin Morris and with
Edward Bull,
The curate; he was fatter than his
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew
the names,
Long learned names of agaric,
moss and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of
the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to
row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately
good,
His own—I call'd him Crichton,
for he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger
nail.

And once I ask'd him of his
early life,
And his first passion; and he an-
swer'd me;

And well his words became him :
 was he not
 A full-cell'd honeycomb of elo-
 quence
 Stored from all flowers ? Poet-
 like he spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I ;
 But thirty moons, one honeymoon
 to that,
 And three rich sennights more, my
 love for her,
 My love for Nature and my love
 for her,
 Of different ages, like twin sisters
 grew.
 Twin sisters differently beautiful.
 To some full music rose and sank
 the sun,
 And some full music seem'd to
 move and change
 With all the varied changes of the
 dark,
 And either twilight and the day
 between ;
 For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise
 again
 Revolving toward fulfilment, made
 it sweet
 To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake,
 to breathe.'

Or this or something like to this
 he spoke.
 Then said the fat-faced curate,
 Edward Bull,
 'I take it, God made the woman
 for the man,
 And for the good and increase of
 the world.
 A pretty face is well, and this is
 well,
 To have a dame indoors, that trims
 us up,
 And keeps us tight ; but these un-
 real ways
 Seem but the theme of writers,
 and indeed
 Worn threadbare. Man is made
 of solid stuff.
 I say, God made the woman for
 the man,
 And for the good and increase of
 the world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the
 pipe too low :
 But I have sudden touches, and
 can run
 My faith beyond my practice into
 his :
 Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill
 I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
 I scarce hear other music : yet say
 on.
 What should one give to light on
 such a dream ?'
 I ask'd him half-sardonically.
 'Give ?'
 Give all thou art,' he answer'd,
 and a light
 Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy
 cheek ;
 'I would have hid her needle in
 my heart,
 To save her little finger from a
 scratch
 No deeper than the skin : my ears
 could hear
 Her lightest breaths : her least re-
 mark was worth
 The experience of the wise. I
 went and came ;
 Her voice fled always thro' the
 summer land ;
 I spoke her name alone. Thrice
 happy days !
 The flower of each, those moments
 when we met,
 The crown of all, we met to part
 no more.'

Were not his words delicious, I
 a beast
 To take them as I did ? but some-
 thing jarr'd ;
 Whether he spoke too largely
 that there seem'd
 A touch of something false, some
 self-conceit,
 Or over-smoothness : howso'er it
 was,
 He scarcely hit my humour, and
 I said :

'Friend Edwin, do not think
 yourself alone
 Of all men happy. Shall not Love
 to me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
 Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?
 But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:
 I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within;
 Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,
 That like a purple beech among the greens
 Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in her:
 It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
 Or something of a wayward modern mind
 Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.
 Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:
 'God made the woman for the use of man,
 And for the good and increase of the world.'
 And I and Edwin laugh'd; and now we paused
 About the windings of the marge to hear
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
 And alders, garden isles; and now we left
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
 By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
 Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
 My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
 The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no more:
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
 The close 'Your Letty, only yours;' and this
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;
 And out I stept, and up I crept: she moved,
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers:
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed
 In some new planet: a silent cousin stole
 Upon us and departed: 'Leave,' she cried,
 'O leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never: here
 I brave the worst:' And while we stood like fools
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they came
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. 'What, with him!
 Go!' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus) 'him!
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen 'Him!'
 Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go!—
 Girl, get you in!' She went—and in one month
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
 And educated whisker. But for me,
 They set an ancient creditor to work:

It seems I broke a close with force
and arms :
There came a mystic token from
the king
To greet the sheriff, needless cour-
tesy !
I read, and fled by night, and
flying turn'd :
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake
below :
I turn'd once more, close-button'd
to the storm ;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor
have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor
cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps :
yet long ago
I have pardon'd little Letty ; not
indeed,
It may be, for her own dear sake
but this,
She seems a part of those fresh
days to me ;
For in the dust and drouth of
London life
She moves among my visions of
the lake,
While the prime swallow dips his
wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and
overhead
The light cloud smoulders on the
summer crag.

COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon
my grave,
To trample round my fallen
head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou
wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the
plover cry ;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy
crime
I care no longer, being all
unblest :

Wed whom thou wilt, but I am
sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me
where I lie :
Go by, go by.

THE EAGLE

FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked
hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he
stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him
crawls ;
He watches from his mountain-
walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

SONNET TO W. C. MACREADY

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-
night we part ;
Full-handed thunders often
have confessed
Thy power, well used to move
the public breast.
We thank thee with our voice, and
from the heart.
Farewell, Macready, since this
night we part.
Go, take thine honours home ;
rank with the best,
Garrick and statelier Kemble,
and the rest
Who made a nation purer through
their art.
Thine is it that our drama did not
die,
Nor flicker down to brainless
pantomime,
And those gilt gauds men-
children swarm to see.
Farewell, Macready ; moral, grave,
sublime ;
Our Shakespeare's bland and
universal eye
Dwells pleased, through twice a
hundred years, on thee.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,
1852

My Lords, we heard you speak :
you told us all
That England's honest censure
went too far;
That our free press should cease
to brawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman
into war.

It was our ancient privilege, my
Lords,
To fling whate'er we felt, not
fearing, into words.

We love not this French God, the
child of Hell,
Wild War, who breaks the con-
verse of the wise;
But though we love kind Peace so
well,
We dare not ev'n by silence
sanction lies.
It might be safe our censures to
withdraw;
And yet, my Lords, not well :
there is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must
speak free,
Tho' all the storm of Europe on
us break;
No little German state are we,
But the one voice in Europe :
we *must* speak;
That if to-night our greatness
were struck dead,
There might be left some record
of the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we
be bold.
Our Britain cannot salve a
tyrant o'er.
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
On her and us and ours for ever-
more.

What ! have we fought for Free-
dom from our prime,
At last to dodge and palter with a
public crime ?

Shall we fear *him* ? our own we
never fear'd.

From our first Charles by force
we wrung our claims.
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we
rear'd,

We flung the burthen of the
second James.

I say, we *never* fear'd ! and as for
these,

We broke them on the land, we
drove them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
people muse
In doubt if you be of our Barons'
breed—

Were those your sires who fought
at Lewes ?

Is this the manly strain of
Runnymede ?

O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of
this monstrous fraud !

We feel, at least, that silence here
were sin,

Not ours the fault if we have
feeble hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin
Have left the last free race with
naked coats !

They knew the precious things
they had to guard :

For us, we will not spare the
tyrant one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
may bawl,

What England was, shall her
true sons forget ?

We are not cotton spinners all,
But some love England and her
honour yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ
shall stand,

And hold against the world this
honour of the land.

HANDS ALL ROUND

FIRST drink a health, this solemn
night,

A health to England, every
guest;

That man's the best cosmopolite
Who loves his native country
best.

May Freedom's oak for ever live
With stronger life from day to
day;

That man's the true Conservative,
Who lops the moulder'd branch
away.

Hands all round !

God the tyrant's hope con-
found !

To this great cause of freedom
drink, my friends,
And the great name of Eng-
land round and round.

A health to Europe's honest men !
Heaven guard them from her
tyrants' jails !

From wrong'd Poerio's noisome
den,
From iron'd limbs and tortured
nails !

We curse the crimes of southern
kings,
The Russian whips and Austrian
rods—

We, likewise, have our evil things ;
Too much we make our Ledgers
Gods,

Yet hands all round !

God the tyrant's cause con-
found !

To Europe's better health we
drink, my friends,
And the great name of Eng-
land round and round.

What health to France, if France
be she,
Whom martial prowess only
charms ?

Yet tell her—Better to be free
Than vanquish all the world in
arms.

Her frantic city's flashing heats
But fire, to blast, the hopes of
men.

Why change the titles of your
streets ?

You fools, you'll want them all
again.

Yet hands all round !

God their tyrant's cause con-
found !

To France, the wiser France, we
drink, my friends,
And the great name of Eng-
land round and round.

Gigantic daughter of the West,
We drink to thee across the
flood,

We know thee most, we love thee
best,

For art thou not of British
blood ?

Should war's mad blast again be
blown,

Permit not thou the tyrant
powers

To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with
ours,

Hands all round !

God the tyrant's cause con-
found !

To our great kinsmen of the
West, my friends,
And the great name of Eng-
land round and round.

O rise, our strong Atlantic sons,
When war against our freedom
springs !

O speak to Europe thro' your
guns !

They *can* be understood by
kings.

You must not mix our Queen with
those

That wish to keep their people
fools ;

Our freedom's foemen are her
foes,

She comprehends the race she
rules.

Hands all round !
 God the tyrant's cause con-
 found !
 To our dear kinsmen of the
 West, my friends,
 And the great cause of free-
 dom round and round.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

[First published 1852.]

I

BURY the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of
 a mighty nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and
 hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom
 we deplore ?
 Here, in streaming London's cen-
 tral roar.
 Let the sound of those he wrought
 for,
 And the feet of those he fought for,
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and
 slow,
 As fits an universal woe,
 Let the long, long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about
 it grow,
 And let the mournful martial
 music blow;
 The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in
 the Past.
 No more in soldier fashion will he
 greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the
 street.

O friends, our chief state oracle is
 mute :

Mourn for the man of long-
 enduring blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate,
 resolute,

Whole in himself, a common good.
 Mourn for the man of amplest
 influence,

Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pre-
 tence,

Great in council and great in war,
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common sense,
 And, as the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.

O good grey head which all men
 knew,

O voice from which their omens
 all men drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fall'n at length that tower of
 strength

Which stood four-square to all the
 winds that blew !

Such was he whom we deplore.
 The long self-sacrifice of life is
 o'er.

The great World-victor's victor
 will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done :
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 England, for thy son.

Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold

That shines over city and river,
 There he shall rest for ever

Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds :
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd
 deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a deeper knell in the heart be
 knoll'd ;

And the sound of the sorrowing
 anthem roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden
cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder
his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a
clime
His captain's ear has heard them
boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing
doom:
When he with those deep voices
wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from
shame;
With those deep voices our dead
captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great
name,
Which he has worn so pure of
blame,
In praise and in dispraise the
same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of
fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of
song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an
honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with
soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and break-
ing on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by
sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou
famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world
began.
Now, to the roll of muffled
drums,
To thee the greatest soldier
comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by
sea;

His foes were thine; he kept us
free;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest
son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and
won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast de-
signs
Of his labour'd rampart lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded
swarms,
Back to France with countless
blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of
men,
Roll of cannon and clash of
arms,
And England pouring on her
foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-
shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of
kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's
iron crown
On that loud sabbeth shook the
spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd
themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant
ray,

And down we swept and charged
and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us
there,
What long-enduring hearts could
do
In that world's-earthquake, Water-
loo !
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of
craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted
isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the
Nile,
If aught of things that here
befall
Touch a spirit among things
divine,
If love of country move thee there
at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid
by thine !
And thro' the centuries let a
people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human
fame,
A people's voice, when they re-
joice
At civic revel and pomp and
game,
Attest their great commander's
claim
With honour, honour, honour,
honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people
yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler
dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and
lawless Powers ;
Thank Him who isled us here, and
roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and
storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to
pay the debt

Of boundless love and reverence
and regret
To those great men who fought,
and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from
brute control ;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the
eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England
whole,
And save the one true seed of
freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient
throne,
That sober freedom out of which
there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate
kings ;
For, saving that, ye help to save
mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into
dust,
And drill the raw world for the
march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and
crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful
overtrust.
Remember him who led your
hosts ;
He bade you guard the sacred
coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the
seaward wall ;
His voice is silent in your council
hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests
lour
For ever silent ; even if they
broke
In thunder, silent ; yet remember
all
He spoke among you, and the Man
who spoke ;
Who never sold the truth to serve
the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God
for power ;
Who let the turbid streams of
rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of
high and low ;
Whose life was work, whose
language rife

With rugged maxims hewn from
 life;
 Who never spoke against a
 foe;
 Whose eighty winters freeze with
 one rebuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on
 the right :
 Truth-teller was our England's
 Alfred named ;
 Truth-lover was our English
 Duke ;
 Whatever record leap to light
 He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious
 wars
 Now to glorious burial slowly
 borne,
 Follow'd by the brave of other
 lands,
 He, on whom from both her open
 hands
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her
 stars,
 And affluent Fortune emptied all
 her horn.
 Yea, let all good things await
 Him who cares not to be great,
 But as he saves or serves the
 state.
 Not once or twice in our rough
 island story,
 The path of duty was the way to
 glory :
 He that walks it, only thirsting
 For the right, and learns to
 deaden
 Love of self, before his journey
 closes,
 He shall find the stubborn thistle
 bursting
 Into glossy purples, which out-
 reden
 All voluptuous garden roses.
 Not once or twice in our fair island
 story,
 The path of duty was the way to
 glory :
 He, that ever following her com-
 mands,

On with toil of heart and knees
 and hands,
 Thro' the long gorge to the far
 light has won
 His path upward, and prevail'd,
 Shall find the toppling crags o'
 Duty scaled
 Are close upon the shining table
 lands
 To which our God Himself is moor
 and sun.
 Such was he : his work is done,
 But while the races of mankind
 endure,
 Let his great example stand
 Colossal, seen of every land,
 And keep the soldier firm, the
 statesman pure :
 Till in all lands and thro' all human
 story
 The path of duty be the way to
 glory :
 And let the land whose hearths he
 saved from shame
 For many and many an age pro-
 claim
 At civic revel and pomp and
 game,
 And when the long-illuminated cities
 flame,
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's
 fame,
 With honour, honour, honour
 honour to him,
 Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
 By some yet unmoulded tongue
 Far on in summers that we shall
 not see :
 Peace, it is a day of pain
 For one about whose patriarchal
 knee
 Late the little children clung :
 O peace, it is a day of pain
 For one, upon whose hand and
 heart and brain
 Once the weight and fate of
 Europe hung.
 Ours the pain, be his the gain !
 More than is of man's degree
 Must be with us, watching here

At this, our great solemnity.
 Whom we see not we revere,
 We revere, and we refrain
 From talk of battles loud and
 vain,
 And brawling memories all too
 free
 For such a wise humility
 As befits a solemn fane :
 We revere, and while we hear
 The tides of Music's golden sea
 Setting toward eternity,
 Uplifted high in heart and hope
 are we,
 Until we doubt not that for one
 so true
 There must be other nobler work
 to do
 Than when he fought at Water-
 loo,
 And Victor he must ever be.
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the
 hill
 And break the shore, and ever-
 more
 Make and break, and work their
 will ;
 Tho' world on world in myriad
 myriads roll
 Round us, each with different
 powers,
 And other forms of life than
 ours,
 What know we greater than the
 soul ?
 On God and Godlike men we build
 our trust.
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the
 people's ears :
 The dark crowd moves, and there
 are sobs and tears :
 The black earth yawns : the
 mortal disappears ;
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
 He is gone who seem'd so great.—
 Gone ; but nothing can bereave
 him
 Of the force he made his own
 Being here, and we believe him
 Something far advanced in State,
 And that he wears a truer crown
 Than any wreath that man can
 weave him.
 Speak no more of his renown,

Lay your earthly fancies down,
 And in the vast cathedral leave
 him.
 God accept him, Christ receive
 him.

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing
 falls
 Of water, sheets of summer
 glass,
 The long divine Peneïan pass,
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
 With such a pencil, such a
 pen,
 You shadow forth to distant
 men,
 I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the
 page,
 And track'd you still on classic
 ground,
 I grew in gladness till I found
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
 And glisten'd—here and there
 alone
 The broad-limb'd Gods at ran-
 dom thrown
 By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads
 oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under
 gloom
 Of cavern pillars ; on the
 swell
 The silver lily heaved and
 fell ;
 And many a slope was rich in
 bloom

From him that on the mountain
 lea
 By dancing rivulets fed his
 flocks
 To him who sat upon the
 rocks,
 And fluted to the morning sea.

MAUD

PART I

I

I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind
the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dab-
bled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a
silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd
her, answers 'Death.'

II

For there in the ghastly pit long
since a body was found,
His who had given me life—
O father! O God! was it
well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and
crush'd, and dinted into the
ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell
with him when he fell.

III

Did he fling himself down? who
knows? for a vast specula-
tion had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and mad-
den'd, and ever wann'd with
despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind
like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd
woodlands drove thro' the
air.

IV

I remember the time, for the roots
of my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead
weight trail'd, by a whisper'd
fright,
And my pulses closed their gates
with a shock on my heart as
I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother
divide the shuddering night.

V

Villany somewhere! whose? One
says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at
least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the
broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme
that had left us flaccid and
drain'd.

VI

Why do they prate of the blessings
of peace? we have made
them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for
all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of
Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen his-
sing in war on his own hearth-
stone?

VII

But these are the days of advance,
the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have
faith in a tradesman's ware or
his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as
I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not open-
ly bearing the sword.

VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively
take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I
have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone,
set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die:
who knows? we are ashes and
dust.

IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and
slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and
hustled together, each sex
like swine.
When only the ledger lives, and
when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but
a company forges the wine.

X

And the vitriol madness flushes up
in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the
yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster
are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in
the very means of life,

XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd,
for the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the
hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick
of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind
his crimson lights.

XII

When a Mammonite mother kills
her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a
pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war!
loud war by land and by
sea,
War with a thousand battles, and
shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet
came yonder round by the
hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang
from the three-decker out of
the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed
rogue would leap from his
counter and till.
And strike, if he could, were it but
with his cheating yardwand,
home.—

XIV

What! am I raging alone as my
father raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and
dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that
I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and
wretched swindler's lie?

XV

Would there be sorrow for *me*?
there was *love* in the pas-
sionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had
made false haste to the
grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him,
and thought he would rise
and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar,
ah God, as he used to rave.

XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill,
I am sick of the moor and the
main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter
chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as
well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the
place and the pit and the
fear?

XVII

Workmen up at the Hall!—they
are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by
the touch of a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence,
of the singular beauty of
Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child;
she promised then to be fair.

XVIII

Maud with her venturous climb-
ings and tumbles and childish
escapes,
Maud the delight of the village,
the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth
when my father dangled the
grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother,
the moon-faced darling of
all,—

XIX

What is she now? My dreams are
bad. She may bring me a
curse.
No, there is fatter game on the
moor; she will let me alone.

Thanks, for the fiend best knows
whether woman or man be the
worse.

I will bury myself in myself, and
the Devil may pipe to his own.

II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm :
God grant I may find it at
last !

It will never be broken by Maud,
she has neither savour nor
salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I
found when her carriage
past,

Perfectly beautiful : let it be
granted her : where is the
fault ?

All that I saw (for her eyes were
downcast, not to be seen)

Faultily faultless, icily regular,
splendidly null,

Dead perfection, no more ; nothing
more, if it had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness,
an hour's defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a
little too ripe, too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline
curve in a sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart-free,
with the least little touch of
spleen.

III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come
you so cruelly meek,

Breaking a slumber in which all
spleenful folly was drown'd,

Pale with the golden beam of an
eyelash dead on the cheek,

Passionless, pale, cold face, star-
sweet on a gloom profound ;

Womanlike, taking revenge too
deep for a transient wrong

Done but in thought to your
beauty, and ever as pale as
before

Growing and fading and growing
upon me without a sound,

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike,
deathlike, half the night long

Growing and fading and growing,
till I could bear it no more,

But arose, and all by myself in my
own dark garden ground,

Listening now to the tide in
its broad-flung shipwrecking
roar,

Now to the scream of a madden'd
beach dragg'd down by the
wave,

Walk'd in a wintry wind by a
ghastly glimmer, and found

The shining daffodil dead, and
Orion low in his grave.

IV

I

A million emeralds break from the
ruby-budded lime

In the little grove where I sit—
ah, wherefore cannot I be

Like things of the season gay, like
the bountiful season bland,

When the far-off sail is blown by
the breeze of a softer clime,

Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom
of a crescent of sea,

The silent sapphire-spangled mar-
riage ring of the land ?

II

Below me, there, is the village, and
looks how quiet and small !

And yet bubbles o'er like a city,
with gossip, scandal, and
spite ;

And Jack on his ale-house bench
has as many lies as a Czar ;

And here on the landward side, by
a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;

And up in the high Hall-garden I
see her pass like a light ;

But sorrow seize ne if ever that
light be my leading star !

III

When have I bow'd to her father,
the wrinkled head of the race ?

I met her to-day with her brother,
but not to her brother I
bow'd ;

I bow'd to his lady-sister as she
rode by on the moor ;

But the fire of a foolish pride
flash'd over her beautiful
face.

O child, you wrong your beauty,
believe it, in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-got-
ten, and I am nameless and
poor.

IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever
ready to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set
smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the
world have its way:
For nature is one with rapine, a
harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow,
the sparrow spear'd by the
shrike,
And the whole little wood where I
sit is a world of plunder and
prey.

V

We are puppets, Man in his pride,
and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are
moved by an unseen hand at
a game
That pushes us off from the board,
and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each
other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle
and grin at a brother's
shame;
However we brave it out, we men
are a little breed.

VI

A monstrous eft was of old the
Lord and Master of Earth,
For him did his high sun flame,
and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to
be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping
an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have
gone to the making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last?
is he not too base?

VII

The man of science himself is
fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a
spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is
whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but
keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a
man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the
sultan of old in a garden of
spice.

VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark,
an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world,
how God will bring them
about?
Our planet is one, the suns are
many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall?
shall I shriek if a Hungary
fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled
with rod or with knout?
I have not made the world, and
He that made it will guide.

IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the
quiet woodland ways.
Where if I cannot be gay let a pas-
sionless peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamour of liars
belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the
world that are ever hissing
dispraise
Because their natures are little,
and, whether he heed it or
not,
Where each man walks with his
head in a cloud of poisonous
flies.

X

And most of all would I flee from
the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and
all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn,
you are all unmeet for a wife.

Your mother is mute in her grave
 as her image in marble above;
 Your father is ever in London,
 you wander about at your
 will;
 You have but fed on the roses, and
 lain in the lilies of life.

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree,
 In the meadow under the Hall!
 She is singing an air that is known
 to me,
 A passionate ballad gallant and
 gay,
 A martial song like a trumpet's
 call!
 Singing alone in the morning of
 life,
 In the happy morning of life and
 of May,
 Singing of men that in battle
 array,
 Ready in heart and ready in hand,
 March with banner and bugle and
 fife
 To the death, for their native land.

II

Maud with her exquisite face,
 And wild voice pealing up to the
 sunny sky,
 And feet like sunny gems on an
 English green,
 Maud in the light of her youth and
 her grace,
 Singing of Death, and of Honour
 that cannot die,
 Till I well could weep for a time
 so sordid and mean,
 And myself so languid and base.

III

Silence, beautiful voice!
 Be still, for you only trouble the
 mind
 With a joy in which I cannot
 rejoice,
 A glory I shall not find.
 Still! I will hear you no more,
 For your sweetness hardly leaves
 me a choice

But to move to the meadow and
 fall before
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and
 adore,
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor
 kind,
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale,
 No sun, but a wannish glare
 In fold upon fold of hueless
 cloud,
 And the budded peaks of the
 wood are bow'd
 Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
 I had fancied it would be fair.

II

Whom but Maud should I meet
 Last night, when the sunset burn'd
 On the blossom'd gable-ends
 At the head of the village street,
 Whom but Maud should I meet?
 And she touch'd my hand with a
 smile so sweet,
 She made me divine amends
 For a courtesy not return'd.

III

And thus a delicate spark
 Of glowing and growing light
 Thro' the livelong hours of the
 dark
 Kept itself warm in the heart of
 my dreams,
 Ready to burst in a colour'd flame:
 Till at last when the morning
 came
 In a cloud, it faded, and seems
 But an ashen-gray delight.

IV

What if with her sunny hair,
 And smile as sunny as cold,
 She meant to weave me a snare
 Of some coquettish deceit,
 Cleopatra-like as of old
 To entangle me when we met,
 To have her lion roll in a silken
 net
 And fawn at a victor's feet.

V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five ?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I
dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep
aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own be-
hoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal
scorn—
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet
sake
A face of tenderness might be
feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings
shake
In another month to his brazen
lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch
and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I
guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying woman-
hood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,

My mother, who was so gentle and
good ?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming
wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday
moan,
And the shrieking rush of the
wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners
cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves
is thrown
About its echoing chambers
wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have
grown
Of a world in which I have hardly
mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and
caught
By that you swore to with-
stand ?
For what was it else within me
wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of
love,
That made my tongue so stammer
and trip
When I saw the treasured splen-
dour, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred
glove,
And the sunlight broke from her
lip ?

X

I have play'd with her when a
child ;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be be-
guiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I
dream'd,
Then the world were not so
bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII

I

Did I hear it half in a doze
 Long since, I know not where ?
 Did I dream it an hour ago,
 When asleep in this arm-chair ?

II

Men were drinking together,
 Drinking and talking of me ;
 'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
 Will have plenty : so let it be.'

III

Is it an echo of something
 Read with a boy's delight,
 Viziers nodding together
 In some Arabian night ?

IV

Strange, that I hear two men,
 Somewhere, talking of me ;
 'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
 Will have plenty : so let it be.'

VIII

She came to the village church,
 And sat by a pillar alone ;
 An angel watching an urn
 Wept over her, carved in stone ;
 And once, but once, she lifted her
 eyes,
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely
 blush'd
 To find they were met by my own ;
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart
 beat stronger
 And thicker, until I heard no
 longer
 The snowy-banded, dilettante,
 Delicate-handed priest intone ;
 And thought, is it pride, and
 mused and sigh'd
 'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX

I was walking a mile,
 More than a mile from the shore,
 The sun look'd out with a smile
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
 And riding at set of day
 Over the dark moor land,

Rapidly riding far away,
 She waved to me with her hand.
 There were two at her side,
 Something flash'd in the sun,
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,
 In a moment they were gone :
 Like a sudden spark
 Struck vainly in the night,
 Then returns the dark
 With no more hope of light.

X

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?
 Was not one of the two at her side
 This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks
 The slavish hat from the villager's
 head ?
 Whose old grandfather has lately
 died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his
 trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd
 gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a
 gutted mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men
 adore,
 And simper and set their voices
 lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work
 divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine
 And over the sullen-purple moor
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II

What, has he found my jewel out ?
 For one of the two that rode at her
 side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was
 he :
 Bound for the Hall, and I think
 for a bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face,
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched race,
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III

Last week came one to the county town,
 To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:
 This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
 Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings
 Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
 This huckster put down war! can he tell
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
 Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
 Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear;
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
 For each is at war with mankind.

IV

I wish I could hear again
 The chivalous battle-song
 That she warbled alone in her joy!
 I might persuade myself then
 She would not do herself this great wrong,
 To take a wanton dissolute boy
 For a man and leader of men.

V

Ah God, for a man with heart,
 head, hand,
 Like some of the simple great ones gone
 For ever and ever by,
 One still strong man in a blatant land,
 Whatever they call him, what care I,
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
 Who can rule and dare not lie.

VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,
 That the man I am may cease to be!

XI

I

O let the solid ground
 Not fail beneath my feet
 Before my life has found
 What some have found so sweet;
 Then let come what come may,
 What matter if I go mad,
 I shall have had my day.

II

Let the sweet heavens endure,
 Not close and darken above me
 Before I am quite quite sure
 That there is one to love me;
 Then let come what come may
 To a life that has been so sad,
 I shall have had my day.

XII

I

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 When twilight was falling,
 Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
 They were crying and calling.

II

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;
 And I, who else, was with her,
 Gathering woodland lilies,
 Myriads blow together.

III

Birds in our wood sang
 Ringing thro' the valleys,
 Maud is here, here, here
 In among the lilies.

IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,
 She took the kiss sedately ;
 Maud is not seventeen,
 But she is tall and stately.

V

I to cry out on pride
 Who have won her favour !
 O Maud were sure of Heaven
 If lowliness could save her.

VI

I know the way she went
 Home with her maiden posy,
 For her feet have touch'd the
 meadows
 And left the daisies rosy.

VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 Were crying and calling to
 her,
 Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?
 One is come to woo her.

VIII

Look, a horse at the door,
 And little King Charley snarl-
 ing
 Go back, my lord, across the moor,
 You are not her darling.

XIII

I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that
 I scorn,
 Is that a matter to make me fret ?
 That a calamity hard to be borne ?
 Well, he may live to hate me
 yet.

Fool that I am to be vext with
 his pride !
 I past him, I was crossing his
 lands ;
 He stood on the path a little
 aside ;
 His face, as I grant, in spite of
 spite,
 Has a broad-blown comeliness, red
 and white,
 And six feet two, as I think, he
 stands ;
 But his essences turn'd the live
 air sick,
 And barbarous opulence jewel-
 thick
 Sunn'd itself on his breast and his
 hands.

II

Who shall call me ungentle, un-
 fair,
 I long'd so heartily then and there
 To give him the grasp of fellow-
 ship ;
 But while I past he was humming
 an air,
 Stopt, and then with a riding whip
 Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
 And curving a contumelious lip
 Gorgonised me from head to foot
 With a stony British stare.

III

Why sits he here in his father's
 chair ?
 That old man never comes to his
 place ;
 Shall I believe him ashamed to be
 seen ?
 For only once, in the village street
 Last year, I caught a glimpse of
 his face,
 A grey old wolf and a lean.
 Scarcely, now, would I call him a
 cheat ;
 For then, perhaps, as a child of
 deceit,
 She might by a true descent be
 untrue ;
 And Maud is as true as Maud is
 sweet :
 Tho' I fancy her sweetness only
 due

To the sweeter blood by the other
side;
Her mother has been a thing
complete,
However, she came to be so
allied.
And fair without, faithful
within,
Maud to him is nothing akin :
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her
mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited
sin
On that huge scapegoat of the
race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him
be!
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV

I

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious
stone
Set in the heart of the carven
gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books,
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company)
looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate :
And I thought as I stood, if a hand,
as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were
laid
On the hasp of the window, and
my Delight

Had a sudden desire, like a glori-
ous ghost, to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven
down to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for
me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark
wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave
as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray
dawn;
But I look'd, and round, all round
the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my
breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain
meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like
a fool of the sleep of death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil
cheer,
That if *I* be dear to some one
else,
Then some one else may have
much to fear;
But if *I* be dear to some one
else,
Then I should be to myself
more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that
I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and
drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI

I

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his
weight;

And so that he find what he went
to seek,

And fulsome Pleasure clog him,
and drown

His heart in the gross mud-honey
of town,

He may stay for a year who has
gone for a week :

But this is the day when I must
speak,

And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day !

O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way ;

Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of
her breast,

And dream of her beauty with
tender dread,

From the delicate Arab arch of her
feet

To the grace that, bright and light
as the crest

Of a peacock, sits on her shining
head,

And she knows it not : O, if she
knew it,

To know her beauty might half
undo it.

I know it the one bright thing to
save

My yet young life in the wilds of
Time,

Perhaps from madness, perhaps
from crime,

Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II

What, if she be fasten'd to this
fool lord,

Dare I bid her abide by her word ?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so
low ?

Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even
for me ?

I trust that it is not so.

III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous
heart,

Let not my tongue be a thrall to
my eye,

For I must tell her before we
part,

I must tell her, or die.

XVII

Go not, happy day,

From the shining fields,

Go not, happy day,

Till the maiden yields.

Rosy is the West,

Rosy is the South,

Roses are her cheeks,

And a rose her mouth.

When the happy Yes

Falters from her lips,

Pass and blush the news

O'er the blowing ships.

Over blowing seas,

Over seas at rest,

Pass the happy news,

Blush it thro' the West ;

Till the red man dance

By his red cedar tree,

And the red man's babe

Leap, beyond the sea.

Blush from West to East,

Blush from East to West,

Till the West is East,

Blush it thro' the West.

Rosy is the West,

Rosy is the South,

Roses are her cheeks,

And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

I

I have led her home, my love, my
only friend.

There is none like her, none.

And never yet so warmly ran my
blood

And sweetly, on and on

Calming itself to the long-wish'd
for end,

Full to the banks, close on the
promised good.

II

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels'
pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the
garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she
comes once more;
But even then I heard her close
the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed,
and she is gone.

III

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers
have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to
thy delicious East.
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have
here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has
changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed
altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness
must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old,
thy great
Forefathers of the thornless gar-
den, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve
from whom she came.

IV

Here will I lie, while these long
branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a
happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be
born
To labour and the mattock-har-
den'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought
to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan

That makes you tyrants in your
iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless
eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn
and brand
His nothingless into man.

V

But now shine on, and what
care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have
found a pearl
The countercharm of space and
hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and
would die
To save from some slight shame
one simple girl.

VI

Would die; for sullen-seeming
Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever
was
In our low world, where yet 'tis
sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to
pass;
It seems that I am happy, that
to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the
grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the
sea.

VII

Not die; but live a life of truest
breath,
And teach true life to fight with
mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in
drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the
dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long
lover's kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not
answer this?
'The dusky strand of Death in-
woven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love
himself more dear.'

VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the
 swell
 Of the long waves that roll in
 yonder bay ?
 And hark the clock within, the
 silver knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past
 in bridal white,
 And died to live, long as my pulses
 play ;
 But now by this my love has
 closed her sight
 And given false death her hand,
 and stol'n away
 To dreamful wastes where footless
 fancies dwell
 Among the fragments of the
 golden day.
 May nothing there her maiden
 grace affright !
 Dear heart, I feel with thee
 the drowsy spell
 My bride to be, my evermore
 delight,
 My own heart's heart my ownest
 own, farewell ;
 It is but for a little space I go :
 And ye meanwhile far over moor
 and fell
 Beat to the noiseless music of the
 night !
 Has our whole earth gone nearer
 to the glow
 Of your soft splendours that you
 look so bright ?
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely
 Hell.
 Beat, happy stars, timing with
 things below,
 Beat with my heart more blest
 than heart can tell,
 Blest, but for some dark under-
 current woe
 That seems to draw—but it shall
 not be so :
 Let all be well, be well.

XIX

I

Her brother is coming back to-
 night,
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
 I have walk'd awake with Truth,
 O when did a morning shine
 So rich in atonement as this
 For my dark-dawning youth,
 Darken'd watching a mother de-
 cline
 And that dead man at her heart
 and mine :
 For who was left to watch her
 but I ?
 Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III

I trust that I did not talk
 To gentle Maud in our walk
 (For often in lonely wanderings
 I have cursed him even to lifeless
 things)
 But I trust that I did not talk,
 Not touch on her father's sin :
 I am sure I did but speak
 Of my mother's faded cheek
 When it slowly grew so thin,
 That I felt she was slowly dying
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd
 with debt :
 For how often I caught her with
 eyes all wet,
 Shaking her head at her son and
 sighing
 A world of trouble within !

IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved
 To speak of the mother she
 loved
 As one scarce less forlorn,
 Dying abroad and it seems apart
 From him who had ceased to share
 her heart,
 And ever mourning over the
 feud,
 The household Fury sprinkled
 with blood
 By which our houses are torn :
 How strange was what she said,
 When only Maud and the brother
 Hung over her dying bed—
 That Maud's dark father and
 mine
 Had bound us one to the other,
 Bethrothed us over their wine,

On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first
sweet breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth
till death,

Mine, mine—our fathers have
sworn.

V

But the true blood spilt had in it
a heat

To dissolve the precious seal on
a bond,

That, if left uncancell'd, had been
so sweet:

And none of us thought of a
something beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart
of the child,

As it were a duty done to the
tomb,

To be friends for her sake, to be
reconciled:

And I was cursing them and my
doom,

And letting a dangerous thought
run wild

While often abroad in the fragrant
gloom

Of foreign churches—I see her
there,

Bright English lily, breathing a
prayer

To be friends, to be reconciled!

VI

But then what a flint is he!

Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me

This brother had laugh'd her down
And at last, when each came home,

He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak

To me, her friend of the years
before;

And this was what had redden'd
her cheek

When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,

I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,

And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses
and play,

Sat with her, read to her, night and
day,

And tended her like a nurse.

VIII

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—

Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,

That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not

amiss.

Well, rough but kind; why let it
be so

For shall not Maud have her will?

IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,

As long as my life endures

I feel I shall owe you a debt,

That I never can hope to pay;

And if ever I should forget

That I owe this debt to you

And for your sweet sake to yours;

O then, what then shall I say?—

If ever I *should* forget,

May God make me more wretched

Than ever I have been yet!

X

So now I have sworn to bury

All this dead body of hate,

I feel so free and so clear

By the loss of that dead weight,

That I should grow light-headed,

I fear,

Fantastically merry;

But that her brother comes, like
a blight

On my fresh hope, to the Hall
to-night.

XX

I

Strange, that I felt so gay,

Strange, that I tried to-day

To beguile her melancholy;

The Sultan, as we name him,—

She did not wish to blame him—
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly :
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due ?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer ;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

II

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give
 A grand political dinner
 To half the squirelings near ;
 And Maud will wear her jewels,
 And the bird of prey will hover,
 And the titmouse hope to win her
 With his chirrup at her ear.

III

A grand political dinner
 To the men of many acres,
 A gathering of the Tory,
 A dinner and then a dance
 For the maids and marriage-
 makers,
 And every eye but mine will
 glance
 At Maud in all her glory.

IV

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it
 Till the dancing will be over ;
 And then, oh then, come out to me
 For a minute, but for a minute,
 Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendour.

XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the
 Hall
 This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me,
 And lost in trouble and moving
 round
 Here at the head of a tinkling
 fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea ;
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee
 (If I read her sweet will right)
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night.'

XXII

I

Come into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has
 flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone ;
 And the woodbine spices are
 wafted abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is
 blown.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on
 high,
 Beginning to faint in the light
 that she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she
 loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon ;
 All night has the casement jessa-
 mine stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in
 tune ;
 Till a silence fell with the waking
 bird,
 And a hush with the setting
 moon.

IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but
one
With whom she has heart to be
gay.
When will the dancers leave her
alone?
She is weary of dance and
play.'
Now half to the setting moon are
gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the
stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night
goes
In babble and revel and
wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are
those,
For one that will never be
thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to
the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI

And the soul of the rose went into
my blood,
As the music clash'd in the
hall;
And long by the garden lake I
stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and
on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than
all;

VII

From the meadow your walks have
left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind
sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your
feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we
meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the
tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into
the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the
lea;
But the rose was awake all night
for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and
thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden
of girls,
Come hither, the dances are
done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of
pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over
with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the
gate.
She is coming, my dove, my
dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, 'She is near,
she is near';
And the white rose weeps, 'She
is late';
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I
hear';
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and
beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and
beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her
feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

PART II

I

I

'The fault was mine, the fault was mine'—

Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,

Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—

It is this guilty hand!—

And there rises ever a passionate cry

From underneath in the darkening land—

What is it, that has been done?

O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,

The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,

The fires of Hell and of Hate;

For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,

When her brother ran in his rag to the gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord;

Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,

And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie,

Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,

And he struck me, madman, over the face,

Struck me before the languid fool,

Who was gaping and grinning by;

Struck for himself an evil stroke;

Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;

For front to front in an hour we stood,

And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood

And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,

That must have life for a blow.

Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye?

'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!'

Then glided out of the joyous wood

The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;

And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood:

It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

II

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?

Yet I thought I saw her stand,

A shadow there at my feet,

High over the shadowy land.

It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,

When they should burst and drown with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,

The little hearts that know not how to forgive:

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,

Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,

That sting each other here in the dust;

We are not worthy to live.

II

I

See what a lovely shell,

Small and pure as a pearl,

Lying close to my foot,

Frail, but a work divine,

Made so fairly well

With delicate spire and whorl,

How exquisitely minute

A miracle of design!

II

What is it? a learned man

Could give it a clumsy name.

Let him name it who can,

The beauty would be the same.

III

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was un-
curl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

V

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a
coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving
eye,
Flying along the land and the
main—
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

VI

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,

So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when
fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so over-
wrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper
sense
For a shell, or a flower, little
things
Which else would have been past
by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm)
and thought
It is his mother's hair.

IX

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all
things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love
go by,
But speak to her all things holy
and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her
asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of
the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

III

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of
stone.—

Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply :
She is but dead, and the time is
at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV

I

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again !

II

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than any thing on earth.

III

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee ;
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they
might tell us
What and where they be.

IV

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirits reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies ;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls ;

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet ;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings ;
In a moment we shall meet ;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender
eye ?
But there rings on a sudden a pas-
sionate cry,
There is some one dying or
dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled ;
In the shuddering dawn, be-
hold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of
pain,
Pass and cease to move about !
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

IX

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide ;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and
loud,
The shadow still the same ;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

XII

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

XIII

But the broad light glares and
beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and
streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me :
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V

I

Dead, long dead,
Long dead !
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with
pain,
For into a shallow grave they are
thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat,
beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream
of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying,
burying,
Clamour and rumble, and ringing
and clatter,

And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace,
but it is not so ;
To have no peace in the grave, is
that not sad ?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go ;
And then to hear a dead man
chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II

Wretchedest age, since Time be-
gan,
They cannot even bury a man ;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the
days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer
was read ;
It is that which makes us loud in
the world of the dead ;
There is none that does his work,
not one ;
A touch of their office might have
sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill
their church,
As the churches have kill'd their
Christ.

III

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress ;
And another, a lord of all things,
praying
To his own great self, as I guess ;
And another, a statesman there,
betraying
His party secret, fool, to the press ;
And yonder a vile physician,
blabbing
The case of his patient,—all for
what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an
empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves
him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold ;

Not let any man think for the
public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private
affair
Within the hearing of cat or
mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet
alone,
But I heard it shouted at once
from the top of the house;
Everything came to be known:
Who told *him* we were there?

V

Not that gray old wolf, for he
came not back
From the wilderness, full of
wolves, where he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his
o'ergrown whelp to crack;
Crack them now for yourself, and
howl, and die.

VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing
lip,
And curse me the British vermin,
the rat;
I know not whether he came in the
Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens
mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies
and holes:
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do
it,
Except that now we poison our
babes, poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

VII

Tell him now: she is standing here
at my head;
Not beautiful now, not even
kind;
He may take her now; for she
never speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent
here.
She is not of us, as I divine;
She comes from another stiller
world of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world
beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the
season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and
flutes:
It is only flowers, they had no
fruits,
And I almost fear they are not
roses, but blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of
pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a
spectral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan
of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his
side?

IX

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one
stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to
think of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second
corpse in the pit?

X

Friend, to be struck by the public
foe,
Then to strike him and lay him
low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from
sin;
But the red life spilt for a private
blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless
war
Are scarcely even akin.

XI

O me, why have they not buried
me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave
so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;

Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
 I will cry to the steps above my
 head
 And somebody, surely, some kind
 heart will come
 To bury me, bury me
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III

VI

I

My life has crept so long on a
 broken wing
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of
 horror and fear,
 That I come to be grateful at last
 for a little thing:
 My mood is changed, for it fell at
 a time of year
 When the face of night is fair on
 the dewy downs,
 And the shining daffodil dies, and
 the Charioteer
 And starry Gemini hang like
 glorious crowns
 Over Orion's grave low down in
 the west,
 That like a silent lightning under
 the stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream
 from a band of the blest,
 And spoke of a hope for the world
 in the coming wars—
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let
 trouble have rest,
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and
 pointed to Mars
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield
 on the Lion's breast.

II

And it was but a dream, yet it
 yielded a dear delight
 To have look'd, tho' but in a
 dream, upon eyes so fair,
 That had been in a weary world
 my one thing bright;
 And it was but a dream, yet it
 lighten'd my despair
 When I thought that a war would
 arise in defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should
 bend or cease,

The glory of manhood stand on his
 ancient height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the
 millionaire:
 No more shall commerce be all in
 all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a
 languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her
 herd increase,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a
 slothful shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the
 cannon's throat
 Shall shake its threaded tears in
 the wind no more.

III

And as months ran on and rumour
 of battle grew,
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate
 heart,' said I
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I
 felt to be pure and true),
 'It is time, O passionate heart and
 morbid eye,
 That old hysterical mock-disease
 should die.'
 And I stood on a giant deck and
 mix'd my breath
 With a loyal people shouting a
 battle cry,
 Till I saw the dreary phantom
 arise and fly
 Far into the North, and battle,
 and seas of death.

IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the
 higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little
 her lust of gold,
 And love of a peace that was full
 of wrongs and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not
 to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner
 of battle unroll'd!
 Tho' many a light shall darken,
 and many shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the
 clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be
 wreak'd on a giant liar;

And many a darkness into the
light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making
of splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under
the sun,
And the heart of a people beat
with one desire;
For the peace, that I deem'd no
peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black
and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of
the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with
a heart of fire.

V

Let it flame or fade, and the war
roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts
in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it
seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good,
than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land,
I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and
the doom assign'd.

THE BROOK

AN IDYL

'HERE, by this brook, we parted;
I to the East
And he for Italy—too late—too
late:
One whom the strong sons of the
world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were
scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than
cent for cent;
Nor could he understand how
money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet him-
self could make
The thing that is not as the thing
that is.
O had he lived! In our school-
books we say,

Of those that held their heads
above the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but
life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish
only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the
leaf,
When all the wood stands in
mist of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the
brook he loved,
For which, in branding summer
of Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English
Neilgherry air
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it
Prattling the primrose fancies of
the boy,
To me that loved him; for "O
brook," he says,
"O babbling brook," says Ed-
mund in his rhyme,
"Whence come you?" and the
brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence
quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is
Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river
and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook
and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than
brook or bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you
caught
His weary daylong chirping, like
the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in
summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,
And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,
And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his
one child!
A maiden of our century, yet
most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet
not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel
wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her
hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut,
when the shell
Divides threefold to show the
fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a
good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and
betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and
heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years
back—the week
Before I parted with poor Ed-
mund; crost
By that old bridge which, half in
ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for
the gleam

Beyond it, where the waters
marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny
Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden
gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and
scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamour'd from a
casement, "Run"
To Katie somewhere in the walks
below,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran:
she moved
To meet me, winding under wood-
bine bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids
down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for
a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment
than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of
those
Who dabbled in the fount of
fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd
philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate
the Deed.

'She told me. She and James
had quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None,
she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I
prest the cause
I learnt that James had flickering
jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd
James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at
once from mine,
And sketching with her slender
pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard's penta-
gram
On garden gravel, let my query
pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till
I ask'd
If James were coming. "Coming
every day,"

She answer'd, "ever longing to
 explain,
 But evermore her father came
 across
 With some long-winded tale, and
 broke him short;
 And James departed vext with
 him and her."
 How could I help her? "Would I
 —was it wrong?"
 (Claspt hands and that petitionary
 grace
 Of sweet seventeen subdued me
 ere she spoke)
 "O would I take her father for
 one hour,
 For one half-hour, and let him
 talk to me!"
 And even while she spoke, I saw
 where James
 Made toward us, like a wader in
 the surf,
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in
 meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for
 your sake!
 For in I went, and call'd old
 Philip out
 To show the farm: full willingly
 he rose:
 He led me thro' the short sweet-
 smelling lanes
 Of his wheat suburb, babbling as
 he went.
 He praised his land, his horses, his
 machines;
 He praised his ploughs, his cows,
 his hogs, his dogs;
 He praised his hens, his geese, his
 guinea-hens;
 His pigeons, who in session on
 their roofs
 Approved him, bowing at their
 own deserts:
 Then from the plaintive mother's
 teat he took
 Her blind and shuddering pup-
 pies, naming each,
 And naming those, his friends, for
 whom they were:
 Then crost the common into Darn-
 ley chase

To show Sir Arthur's deer. In
 copse and fern
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and
 tail.
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted
 beech,
 He pointed out a pasturing colt
 and said:
 "That was the four-year-old
 sold the Squire."
 And there he told a long long
 winded tale
 Of how the Squire had seen the
 colt at grass,
 And how it was the thing his
 daughter wish'd,
 And how he sent the bailiff to the
 farm
 To learn the price, and what the
 price he ask'd,
 And how the bailiff swore that he
 was mad,
 But he stood firm; and so the
 matter hung;
 He gave them line: and five days
 after that
 He met the bailiff at the Golden
 Fleece,
 Who then and there had offer'd
 something more,
 But he stood firm; and so the
 matter hung;
 He knew the man; the colt would
 fetch its price;
 He gave them line: and how by
 chance at last
 (It may be May or April, he forgot
 The last of April or the first of
 May)
 He found the bailiff riding by the
 farm,
 And, talking from the point, he
 drew him in,
 And there he mellow'd all his
 heart with ale,
 Until they closed a bargain, hand
 in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sighs
 of haven, he,
 Poor fellow, could he help it
 recommenced,
 And ran thro' all the colt's
 chronicle,

Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy,
Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon,
the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and
the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still;
and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the
falling sun,
And following our own shadows
thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from
Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of
sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all
things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance
Among my skimming swallows,
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and
these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother,
Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and
rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace:
and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste
of words
Remains the lean P.W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it:
Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian
seas
Far off, and holds her head to
other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons.
All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on
a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in
his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing
o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age
forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a
sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the
hedge
The fragile bindweed bells and
briony rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a
maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze
he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut,
when the shell
Divides threefold to show the
fruit within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are
you from the farm?'
'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a
little: pardon me;
What do they call you?' 'Katie.'
'That were strange.
What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!'
'That is my name.'
'Indeed!' and here he look'd so
self-perplexed,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing
blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he
wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strange-
ness in his dream.
Then looking at her; 'Too happy,
fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad
world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore
your name
About these meadows, twenty
years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said
Katie, 'we came back.
We bought the farm we tenanted
before.
Am I so like her? so they said on
board.'

Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
 My mother, as it seems you did,
 the days
 That most she loves to talk of,
 come with me.
 My brother James is in the harvest field :
 But she—you will be welcome—
 O, come in !'

THE LETTERS

I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
 And saw the altar cold and bare.
 A clog of lead was round my feet,
 A band of pain across my brow ;
 'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
 Before you hear my marriage vow.'

II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
 That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,
 We met, but only meant to part.
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;
 I saw with half-unconscious eye
 She wore the colours I approved.

III

She took the little ivory chest,
 With a half sigh she turn'd the key,
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,
 And gave my letters back to me.

And gave the trinkets and the rings,
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;
 As looks a father on the things
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV

She told me all her friends had said ;
 I raged against the public liar ;
 She talk'd as if her love were dead
 But in my words were seeds of fire.
 'No more of love ; your sex is known :
 I never will be twice deceived.
 Henceforth I trust the man alone
 The woman cannot be believed.

V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell
 (And women's slander is the worst),
 And you, whom once I loved so well,
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
 I shook her breast with vague alarms—
 Like torrents from a mountain source
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,
 And sweet the vapour-braided blue,
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars
 As homeward by the church drew.
 The very graves appear'd to smile
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;
 'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,
 There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine
and mine,
In lands of palm and southern
pine;
In lands of palm, of orange-
blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia
show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road;
How like a gem, beneath, the
city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny
waters,
That only heaved with a summer
swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in
hue;
Where, here and there, on sandy
beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to
rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on moun-
tain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple
cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to
him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us
most,
Not the clipt palm of which they
boast;
But distant colour, happy ham-
let,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent,
seen
A light amid its olives green;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
And, crossing, oft we saw the
glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and
cold,
Those niched shapes of noble
mould,
A princely people's awful
princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden
hours,
In those long galleries, were ours;
What drives about the fresh
Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each
complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard
plain
Remember what a plague of rain;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at
Parma;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the
smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard
piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded
aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred
spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.

I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as
they.

How faintly flush'd, how phantom
fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy pencill'd
valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and
blast
Had blown the lake beyond his
limit,
And all was flooded; and how we
past

From Como, when the light was
grey,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the
castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we
slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd
awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a
terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last
adieu,
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest
summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no
longer
To lands of summer across the
sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold :
Yet here to-night in this dark
city,
When ill and weary, alone and
cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and
dry,
This nursing of another sky
Still in the little book you lent
me,
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven
and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty
summer
And grey metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of
pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant
brain,
Perchance, to dream you still
beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares em-
ploy,
Godfather, come and see your boy :
Your presence will be sun in
winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his
due,
Should eighty-thousand college
councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at
you;

Should all our churchmen foam in
spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give
you welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of
Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke
 of town,
 I watch the twilight falling
 brown
 All round a careless order'd
 garden
 Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you
 dine,
 But honest talk and wholesome
 wine,
 And only hear the magpie
 gossip
 Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either
 hand,
 To break the blast of winter,
 stand ;
 And further on, the hoary
 Channel
 Tumbles a breaker on chalk and
 sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
 Some ship of battle slowly creep,
 And on thro' zones of light and
 shadow

Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern
 sin

Which made a selfish war begin ;
 Dispute the claims, arrange the
 chances ;

Emperor, Ottoman, which shall
 win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
 Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
 Till you should turn to dearer
 matters,

Dear to the man that is dear to
 God ;

How best to help the slender
 store,

How mend the dwellings, of the
 poor ;

How gain in life, as life ad-
 vances,

Valour and charity more and
 more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn
 as yet

Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
 But when the wreath of March
 has blossom'd,
 Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
 For those are few we hold as
 dear ;

Nor pay but one, but come for
 many,

Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL

I

O WELL for him whose will is
 strong !

He suffers, but he will not suffer
 long ;

He suffers, but he cannot suffer
 wrong :

For him nor moves the loud world's
 random mock,

Nor all Calamity's hugest waves
 confound,

Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with tur-
 bulent sound,

In middle ocean meets the surging
 shock,

Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not
 with time,

Corrupts the strength of heaven-
 descended Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted
 crime,

Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still !

He seems as one whose footsteps
 halt,

Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary sultry land,

Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous
 hill,

The city sparkles like a grain of
 salt.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

I

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns !' he said ;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade !'
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

THE WAR

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,
Storm in the South that darkens
the day,
Storm of battle and thunder of
war,
Well, if it do not roll our way.
Storm ! storm ! Riflemen
form !
Ready, be ready to meet
the storm !
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form !

Be not deaf to the sound that
warns !
Be not gull'd by a despot's
plea !
Are figs of thistles or grapes of
thorns ?
How should a despot set men
free ?
Form ! form ! Riflemen
form !
Ready, be ready to meet
the storm !
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form !

Let your reforms for a moment
go,
Look to your butts and take
your aims.
Better a rotten borough or so,
Than a rotten fleet or a city in
flames !

Form! form! Riflemen
form!

Ready, be ready to meet
the storm!

Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form!

Form, be ready to do or die!

Form in Freedom's name and
the Queen's!

True, that we have a faithful ally,
But only the Devil knows what
he means.

Form! form! Riflemen
form!

Ready, be ready to meet
the storm!

Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen
form!

ODE FOR THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1862

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
sweet,

In this wide hall with earth's
invention stored,

And praise th' invisible universal
Lord,

Who lets once more in peace the
nations meet,

Where Science, Art, and Labour
have outpour'd

Their myriad horns of plenty at
our feet.

O silent father of our Kings to be
Mourn'd in this golden hour of
jubilee,

For this, for all, we weep our
thanks to thee!

The world-compelling plan was
thine,

And, lo! the long laborious
miles

Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,

Rich in model and design;

Harvest-tool and husbandry,

Loom, and wheel, and engin'ry,

Secrets of the sullen mine,

Steel and gold, and corn and wine,

Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
Sunny tokens of the Line,

Polar marvels, and a feast

Of wonder, out of West and East,
And shapes and hues of Art
divine!

All of beauty, all of use,

That one fair planet can produce,
Brought from under every star,

Blown from over every main,

And mixt, as life is mixt with
pain,

The works of peace with works
of war.

War himself must make alliance

With rough Labour and fine
Science,

Else he would but strike in vain.

And is the goal so far away?

Far, how far, no tongue can say:

Let us dream our dream to-day.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise
who reign,

From growing commerce loose her
latest chain,

And let the fair white-winged
peacemaker fly

To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the
golden hours,

Till each man find his own in all
men's good,

And all men work in noble brother-
hood,

Breaking their mailed fleets and
armed towers,

And ruling by obeying nature's
powers,

And gathering all the fruits of
earth and crown'd with all
her flowers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over
the sea,

Alexandra!

Saxon and Norman and Dane are
we,

But all of us Danes in our welcome
of thee,

Alexandra!

Welcome her, thunders of fort and
 of fleet!
 Welcome her, thundering cheer
 of the street!
 Welcome her, all things youthful
 and sweet,
 Scatter the blossom under her
 feet!
 Break, happy land, into earlier
 flowers!
 Make music, O bird, in the new-
 budded bowers!
 Blazon your mottoes of blessing
 and prayer!
 Welcome her, welcome her, all
 that is ours!
 Warble, O bugle, and trumpet,
 blare!
 Flags, flutter out upon turrets and
 towers!
 Flames, on the windy headland
 flare!
 Utter your jubilee, steeple and
 spire!
 Clash, ye bells, in the merry March
 air!
 Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
 Rush to the roof, sudden rocket,
 and higher
 Melt into stars for the land's
 desire!
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on
 the strand,
 Roar as the sea when he welcomes
 the land,
 And welcome her, welcome the
 land's desire,
 The sea-kings' daughter as happy
 as fair,
 Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
 Bride of the heir of the kings of
 the sea—
 O joy to the people and joy to the
 throne,
 Come to us, love us and make us
 your own:
 For Saxon or Dane or Norman
 we,
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we
 be,
 We are each all Dane in our wel-
 come of thee,

Alexandra!

ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have
 left a chasm;
 And in the chasm are foam and
 yellow sands;
 Beyond, red roofs about a narrow
 wharf
 In cluster; then a moulder'd
 church; and higher
 A long street climbs to one tall-
 tower'd mill;
 And high in heaven behind it a
 grey down
 With Danish barrows; and a hazel-
 wood,
 By autumn nutters haunted,
 flourishes
 Green in a cuplike hollow of the
 down.

Here on this beach a hundred
 years ago,
 Three children of three houses,
 Annie Lee,
 The prettiest little damsel in the
 port,
 And Philip Ray, the miller's only
 son,
 And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's
 lad
 Made orphan by a winter ship-
 wreck, play'd
 Among the waste and lumber of
 the shore,
 Hard coils of cordage, swarthy
 fishing-nets,
 Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats
 updrawn;
 And built their castles of dissolv-
 ing sand
 To watch them overflow'd, or
 following up
 And flying the white breaker, daily
 left
 The little footprint daily wash'd
 away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath
 the cliff:
 In this the children play'd at
 keeping house.
 Enoch was host one day, Philip
 the next,

While Annie still was mistress ; but
at times

Enoch would hold possession for a
week :

'This is my house and this my
little wife.'

'Mine too,' said Philip, 'turn and
turn about :'

When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch
stronger-made

Was master : then would Philip,
his blue eyes

All flooded with the helpless
wrath of tears,

Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,'
and at this

The little wife would weep for
company,

And pray them not to quarrel for
her sake,

And say she would be little wife to
both.

But when the dawn of rosy
childhood past,

And the new warmth of life's
ascending sun

Was felt by either, either fixt his
heart

On that one girl ; and Enoch spoke
his love,

But Philip loved in silence ; and
the girl

Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to
him ;

But she loved Enoch ; tho' she
knew it not,

And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch
set

A purpose evermore before his
eyes,

To hoard all savings to the utter-
most,

To purchase his own boat, and
make a home

For Annie : and so prosper'd that
at last

A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not

breathe
For leagues along that breaker-
beaten coast

Than Enoch. Likewise had he
served a year

On board a merchantman, and
made himself

Full sailor ; and he thrice had
pluck'd a life

From the dread sweep of the down
streaming seas :

And all men look'd upon him
favourably :

And ere he touch'd his one-and-
twentieth May

He purchased his own boat, and
made a home

For Annie, neat and nestlike, half-
way up

The narrow street that clamber'd
toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn
eventide,

The younger people making holi-
day,

With bag and sack and basket,
great and small,

Went nutting to the hazels.
Philip stay'd

(His father lying sick and needing
him)

An hour behind ; but as he climb'd
the hill,

Just where the prone edge of the
wood began

To feather toward the hollow, saw
the pair,

Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-
hand,

His large grey eyes and weather-
beaten face

All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar.

Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read

his doom ;

Then, as their faces drew together,
groan'd,

And slipt aside, and like a wounded
life

Crept down into the hollows of the
wood ;

There, while the rest were loud in
merrymaking,

Had his dark hour unseen, and
rose and past

Bearing a lifelong hunger in his
heart.

So these were wed, and merrily
rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven
happy years,
Seven happy years of health and
competence,
And mutual love and honourable
toil;
With children; first a daughter.
In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the
noble wish
To save all earnings to the utter-
most,
And give his child a better bring-
ing up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish
renew'd,
When two years after came a boy,
to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on
wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward; for
in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's
ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his
face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand
winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were
known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the
down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-
whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely
Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's
ministering.

Then came a change, as all
things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the
narrow port
Open'd a larger haven: thither
used
Enoch at times to go by land or
sea;
And once when there, and clam-
bering on a mast
In harbour, by mischance he slept
and fell:

A limb was broken when they
lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there,
his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his
trade
Taking her bread and theirs: and
on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fear-
ing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and
gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of
the night,
To see his children leading ever-
more
Low miserable lives of hand-to-
mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then
he pray'd
'Save them from this, whatever
comes to me.'
And while he pray'd, the master of
that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his
mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and
valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-
bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain.
Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before
she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would
Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented
to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his
prayer.

So now that shadow of mis-
chance appear'd
No graver than as when some
little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the
sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet
the wife—
When he was gone—the children
—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on
his plans;

To sell the boat—and yet he loved
her well—
How many a rough sea had he
weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows
his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with
what she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie
forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or
their wives—
So might she keep the house while
he was gone.
Should he not trade himself out
yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea
twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning
rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones
educated,
And pass his days in peace among
his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart deter-
mined all:
Then moving homeward came on
Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her
latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy
cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his
arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled
all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled
fatherlike,
But had no heart to break his pur-
poses
To Annie, till the morrow, when
he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden
ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against
his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition
she,
But manifold entreaties, many a
tear,

Many a sad kiss by day by night
renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out
of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he
cared
For her or his dear children, not
to go.
He not for his own self caring but
her,
Her and her children, let her plead
in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore
it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old
sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores,
and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting
room
With shelf and corner for the goods
and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at
home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, ham-
mer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie
seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising,
shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his care-
ful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having
order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature
packs
Her blossom or her seedling,
paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie
to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till
morn.

And Enoch faced this morning
of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his
Annie's fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a
laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing
man
Bow'd himself down, and in that
mystery

Where God-in-man is one with
man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife
and babes
Whatever came to him : and then
he said
'Annie, this yoyage by the grace
of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all
of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear
fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before
you know it.'
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle,
'and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little
one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better
for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon
my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign
parts,
And make him merry, when I
come home again.
Come Annie, come, cheer up,
before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully
she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but
when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver
things
In sailor fashion roughly sermon-
izing
On providence and trust in
Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the
village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath
the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it
for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it
overflow.

At length she spoke 'O Enoch,
you are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well
know I
That I shall look upon your face
no more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I
shall look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes
here
(He named the day) get you a
seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all
your fears.'

But when the last of those last
moments came,
'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be
comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come
again,
Keep everything shipshape, for I
must go.
And fear no more for me; or if
you fear
Cast all your cares on God; that
anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those utter-
most
Parts of the morning? if I flee
to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea
is His,
The sea is His : He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his
drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken
little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one,
who slept
After a night of feverous wake-
fulness,
When Annie would have raised
him Enoch said
'Wake him not; let him sleep;
how should the child
Remember this?' and kiss'd him
in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's fore-
head clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he
kept
Thro' all his future; but now
hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and
went his way.

She went the day, that Enoch
 mention'd, came,
 Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain :
 perhaps
 She could not fix the glass to suit
 her eye;
 Perhaps her eye was dim, hand
 tremulous;
 She saw him not : and while he
 stood on deck
 Waving, the moment and the
 vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the
 vanishing sail
 She watch'd it, and departed
 weeping for him;
 Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence
 as his grave,
 Set her sad will no less to chime
 with his,
 But throve not in her trade, not
 being bred
 To barter, nor compensating the
 want
 By shrewdness, neither capable
 of lies,
 Nor asking overmuch and taking
 less,
 And still foreboding 'what would
 Enoch say ?'
 For more than once, in days of
 difficulty
 And pressure, had she sold her
 wares for less
 Than what she gave in buying
 what she sold :
 She fail'd and sadden'd knowing
 it; and thus,
 Expectant of that news which
 never came,
 Gain'd for her own a scanty
 sustenance,
 And lived a life of silent melan-
 choly.

Now the third child was sickly-
 born and grew
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared
 for it
 With all a mother's care : never-
 theless,
 Whether her business often call'd
 her from it,

Or thro' the want of what it
 needed most,
 Or means to pay the voice who
 best could tell
 What most it needed—howsoe'er
 it was,
 After a lingering,—ere she was
 aware,—
 Like the caged bird escaping
 suddenly,
 The little innocent soul flitted
 away.

In that same week when Annie
 buried it,
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd
 for her peace
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd
 upon her),
 Smote him, as having kept aloof
 so long.
 'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see
 her now,
 May be some little comfort;'
 therefore went,
 Past thro' the solitary room in
 front,
 Paused for a moment at an inner
 door,
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one
 opening,
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with
 her grief,
 Fresh from the burial of her little
 one,
 Cared not to look on any human
 face,
 But turn'd her own toward the
 wall and wept.
 Then Philip standing up said
 falteringly
 'Annie, I came to ask a favour of
 you.'

He spoke; the passion in her
 moan'd reply
 'Favour from one so sad and so
 forlorn
 As I am !' half abash'd him; yet
 unask'd,
 His bashfulness and tenderness at
 war,
 He set himself beside her, saying
 to her :

'I came to speak to you of what
 he wish'd,
 Enoch, your husband : I have ever
 said
 You chose the best among us—a
 strong man :
 For where he fixt his heart he set
 his hand
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore
 it thro'.
 And wherefore did he go this
 weary way,
 And leave you lonely ? not to see
 the world—
 For pleasure ?—nay, but for the
 wherewithal
 To give his babes a better bringing
 up
 Than his had been, or yours : that
 was his wish.
 And if he come again, vext will he
 be
 To find the precious morning hours
 were lost.
 And it would vex him even in his
 grave,
 If he could know his babes were
 running wild
 Like colts about the waste. So,
 Annie, now—
 Have we not known each other all
 our lives ?
 I do beseech you by the love you
 bear
 Him and his children not to say
 me nay—
 For, if you will, when Enoch
 comes again
 Why then he shall repay me—if
 you will,
 Annie—for I am rich and well-
 to-do.
 Now let me put the boy and girl to
 school :
 This is the favour that I came to
 ask.'

Then Annie with her brows
 against the wall
 Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the
 face ;
 I seem so foolish and so broken
 down.

When you came in my sorrow
 broke me down ;
 And now I think your kindness
 breaks me down ;
 But Enoch lives ; that is borne in
 on me :
 He will repay you : money can be
 repaid ;
 Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd
 'Then you will let me, Annie ?'

There she turn'd,
 She rose, and fixt her swimming
 eyes upon him,
 And dwelt a moment on his kindly
 face,
 Then calling down a blessing on
 his head
 Caught at his hand, and wrung it
 passionately,
 And past into the little garth
 beyond.
 So lifted up in spirit he moved
 away.

Then Philip put the boy and
 girl to school,
 And bought them needful books,
 and every way,
 Like one who does his duty by his
 own,
 Made himself theirs ; and tho' for
 Annie's sake,
 Fearing the lazy gossip of the
 port,
 He oft denied his heart his dearest
 wish,
 And seldom crost her threshold,
 yet he sent
 Gifts by the children, garden
 herbs and fruit,
 The late and early roses from his
 wall,
 Or conies from the down, and now
 and then
 With some pretext of fineness in
 the meal
 To save the offence of charitable,
 flour
 From his tall mill that whistled on
 the waste.

But Philip did not fathom
 Annie's mind :
 Scarce could the woman when he
 came upon her,
 Out of full heart and boundless
 gratitude
 Light on a broken word to thank
 him with.
 But Philip was her children's all-
 in-all;
 From distant corners of the street
 they ran
 To greet his hearty welcome
 heartily;
 Lords of his house and of his mill
 were they;
 Worried his passive ear with petty
 wrongs
 Or pleasures, hung upon him,
 play'd with him
 And call'd him Father Philip.
 Philip gain'd
 As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd
 to them
 Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
 Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
 Down at the far end of an avenue,
 Going we know not where: and
 so ten years,
 Since Enoch left his hearth and
 native land,
 Fled forward, and no news of
 Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's
 children long'd
 To go with others, nutting to the
 wood,
 And Annie would go with them;
 then they begg'd
 For Father Philip (as they call'd
 him) too :
 Him, like the working bee in
 blossom-dust,
 Blanch'd with his mill, they found;
 and saying to him
 'Come with us, Father Philip' he
 denied;
 But when the children pluck'd at
 him to go,
 He laugh'd, and yielded readily to
 their wish,
 For was not Annie with them?
 and they went.

But after scaling half the weary
 down,
 Just where the prone edge of the
 wood began
 To feather toward the hollow, all
 her force
 Fail'd her; and sighing, 'let me
 rest' she said :
 So Philip rested with her well-
 content;
 While all the younger ones with
 jubilant cries
 Broke from their elders, and
 tumultuously
 Down thro' the whitening hazels
 made a plunge
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and
 bent or broke
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear
 away
 Their tawny clusters, crying to
 each other
 And calling, here and there, about
 the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side
 forgot
 Her presence, and remember'd one
 dark hour
 Here in this wood, when like a
 wounded life
 He crept into the shadow: at last
 he said,
 Lifting his honest forehead,
 'Listen, Annie,
 How merry they are down yonder
 in the wood.
 Tired, Annie?' for she did not
 speak a word.
 'Tired?' but her face had fall'n
 upon her hands;
 At which, as with a kind of anger
 in him,
 'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the
 ship was lost.
 No more of that! why should you
 kill yourself
 And make them orphans quite?'
 And Annie said
 'I thought not of it: but—I know
 not why—
 Their voices make me feel so
 solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
 'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
 And it has been upon my mind so long,
 That tho' I know not when it first came there,
 I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
 It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
 That he who left you ten long years ago
 Should still be living; well then—let me speak :
 I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :
 I cannot help you as I wish to do
 Unless—they say that women are so quick—
 Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
 I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
 A father to your children : I do think
 They love me as a father : I am sure
 That I love them as if they were mine own;
 And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
 That after all these sad uncertain years,
 We might be still as happy as God grants
 To any of His creatures. Think upon it :
 For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
 No burthen, save my care for you and yours :
 And we have known each other all our lives,
 And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke :
 'You have been as God's good angel in our house.
 God bless you for it, God reward you for it,

Philip, with something happier than myself.
 Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
 As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'
 'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved
 A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,
 Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while :
 If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
 Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :
 Surely I shall be wiser in a year :
 O wait a little!' Philip sadly said
 'Annie, as I have waited all my life
 I well may wait a little.' 'Nay' she cried
 'I am bound : you have my promise—in a year :
 Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?'
 And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
 Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
 Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
 Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
 And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
 Up came the children laden with their spoil;
 Then all descended to the port and there
 At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
 Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to you,
 That was your hour of weakness I was wrong.
 I am always bound to you, but you are free.'
 Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment,
as it were,
While yet she went about her
household ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest
words,
That he had loved her longer than
she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd
again,
And there he stood once more
before her face,
Claiming her promise. 'Is it a
year?' she ask'd.
'Yes, if the nuts,' he said, 'be ripe
again:
Come out and see.' But she—
she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change
—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that
she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip
with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and
his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's
hand,
'Take your own time, Annie, take
your own time.'
And Annie could have wept for
pity of him;
And yet she held him on delay-
ingly
With many a scarce-believable
excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-
sufferance,
Till half another year had slipt
away.

By this the lazy gossips of the
port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal
wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but
trifle with her;
Some that she but held off to draw
him on;
And others laugh'd at her and
Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not
their own minds;

And one, in whom all evil fancies
clung
Like serpent eggs together, laugh-
ingly
Would hint at worse in either.
Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd
his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest
upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of
them
And lift the household out of
poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting
grew
Careworn and wan; and all these
things fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but
earnestly
Pray'd for a sign: 'my Enoch, is
he gone?'
Then compass'd round by the
blind wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror
of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck
herself a light,
Then desperately seized the Holy
Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the
text,
'Under a palm tree.' That was
nothing to her:
No meaning there: she closed the
Book and slept:
When lo! her Enoch, sitting on a
height,
Under a palm tree, over him the
Sun:
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is
happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest: yonder
shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and
these be palms
Whereof the happy people strow-
ing cried
"Hosanna in the highest!"' Here
she woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said
wildly to him
'There is no reason why we should
not wed.'
'Then for God's sake,' he an-
swer'd, 'both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at
once.'

So these were wed and merrily
rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they
were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's
heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside
her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper
on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she
to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out
alone.
What ail'd her then, that ere she
enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the
latch,
Fearing to enter: Philip thought
he knew:
Such doubts and fears were com-
mon to her state,
Being with child: but when her
child was born,
Then her new child was as herself
renew'd,
Then the new mother came about
her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-
in-all,
And that mysterious instinct
wholly died.

And where was Enoch? pros-
perously sail'd
The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at
setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging east-
ward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet
unvext
She slept across the summer of the
world,
Then after a long tumble about the
Cape

And frequent interchange of foul
and fair,
She passing thro' the summer
world again,
The breath of heaven came con-
tinually
And sent her sweetly by the
golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven

There Enoch traded for himself
and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of
those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the
babes.

Less lucky her home voyage
at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day
by day,
Scarce rocking, her full-busted
figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering
from her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then
winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course o'
them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under
moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry o'
'breakers' came
The crash of ruin, and the loss o'
all
But Enoch and two others. Hal-
the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and
broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isl-
at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely
sea.

No want was there of human
sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and
nourishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to
take
The helpless life so wild that it
was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing moun-
tain gorge

They built, and thatch'd with
leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So
the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteous-
ness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-
content.

For one, the youngest, hardly
more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin
and wreck,
Lay lingering out a three-years'
death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After
he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen
stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of
himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian
fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived
alone.
In those two deaths he read God's
warning 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the
peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like
ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown
of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and
of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvu-
luses
That coil'd around the stately
stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the
glows
And glories of the broad belt of
the world,
All these he saw; but what he fain
had seen
He could not see, the kindly
human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but
heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling
ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering
on the reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees
that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or
the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the
wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all
day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing
gorge;
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
sail:
No sail from day to day, but every
day
The sunrise broken into scarlet
shafts
Among the palms and ferns and
precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the
east;
The blaze upon his island over-
head;
The blaze upon the waters to the
west;
Then the great stars that globed
themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and
again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but
no sail.

There often as he watch'd or
seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him
paused,
A phantom made of many phan-
toms moved
Before him haunting him, or he
himself
Moved haunting people, things and
places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the
line;
The babes, their babble, Annie,
the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the
leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the
lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he
sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-
gloomings down,

The gentle shower, the smell of
dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-
colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of
his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far
away—
He heard the pealing of his parish
bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,
started up
Shuddering, and when the beau-
teous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his
poor heart
Spoken with That, which being
everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him,
seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of
solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silver-
ing head
The sunny and rainy seasons came
and went
Year after year. His hopes to see
his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar
fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his
lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another
ship
(She wanted water) blown by
baffling winds,
Like the 'Good Fortune,' from her
destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing
where she lay :
For since the mate had seen at
early dawn
Across a break on the mist-
wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the
hills,
They sent a crew that landing
burst away
In search of stream or fount, and
fill'd the shores
With clamour. Downward from
his mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded
solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human,
strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiot-
like it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and mak-
ing signs
They knew not what : and yet he
led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet
water ran ;
And ever as he mingled with the
crew,
And heard them talking, his long-
bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them
understand ;
Whom, when their casks were
fill'd they took aboard :
And there the tale he utter'd
brokenly,
Scarce credited at first but more
and more,
Amazed and melted all who
listen'd to it ;
And clothes they gave him and
free passage home ;
But oft he work'd among the rest
and shook
His isolation from him. None of
these
Came from his country, or could
answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he
cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long
delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but
evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy
wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded
moon
He like a lover down thro' all his
blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morn-
ing breath
Of England, blown across her
ghostly wall :
And that same morning officers
and men
Levied a kindly tax upon them-
selves,

Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it :
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward — home — what home ? had he a home ?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in grey;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasture.
On the high-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down :
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking 'dead or dead to me !'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone
Who kept it; and his widow, Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child : and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion : any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller : only when she closed
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost'
He, shaking his grey head pathetically,
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost ;'
Again in deeper inward whispers 'lost !'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her
face again;
'If I might look on her sweet face
again
And know that she is happy.' So
the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and
drove him forth,
At evening when the dull Novem-
ber day
Was growing duller twilight, to
the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all
below;
There did a thousand memories
roll upon him,
Unspeaking for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable
light,
Far-blazing from the rear of
Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon blaze
allures
The bird of passage, till he madly
strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary
life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on
the street,
The latest house to landward; but
behind,
With one small gate that open'd
on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square
and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient ever-
green,
A yew tree, and all round it ran a
walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle
walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew;
and thence
That which he better might have
shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better,
Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the bur-
nish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was
the hearth:

And on the right hand of the
hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old
times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across
his knees;
And o'er her second father stoop'd
a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her
lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a
ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his
creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and
they laugh'd:
And on the left hand of the hearth
he saw
The mother glancing often toward
her babe,
But turning now and then to speak
with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall
and strong,
And saying that which pleased
him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man came
to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw
the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's
knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the
happiness,
And his own children tall and
beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in
his place,
Lord of his rights and of his
children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had
told him all,
Because things seen are mightier
than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the
branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible
cry,
Which in one moment, like the
blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of
the heart.

He therefore turning softly like
a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should
grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden
wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble
and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it,
and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber
door,
Behind him, and came out upon
the waste.

And there he would have knelt,
but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone
he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and
pray'd.

'Too hard to bear ! why did they
take me thence ?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,
Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely
isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneli-
ness
A little longer ! aid me, give me
strength
Not to tell her, never to let her
know.
Help me not to break in upon her
peace.
My children too ! must I not speak
to these ?
They know me not. I should
betray myself.
Never : no father's kiss for me—
the girl
So like her mother, and the boy,
my son.'

There speech and thought and
nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced ; but when he
rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home
again,
All down the long and narrow
street he went

Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a
song,
'Not to tell her, never to let her
know.'

He was not all unhappy. His
resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and
evermore
Prayer from a living source within
the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter
world,
Like fountains of sweet water in
the sea,
Kept him a living soul. 'This
miller's wife'
He said to Miriam 'that you told
me of,
Has she no fear that her first
husband lives ?'
'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam,
'fear enow !
If you could tell her you had seen
him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort ;'
and he thought
'After the Lord has call'd me she
shall know,
I wait His time,' and Enoch set
himself,
Scorning an alms, to work where-
by to live.
Almost to all things could he turn
his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and
wrought
To make the boatmen fishing
nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall
barks,
That brought the stinted com-
merce of those days ;
Thus earned a scanty living for
himself :
Yet since he did but labour for
himself,
Work without hope, there was not
life in it
Whereby the man could live ; and
as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet
the day

When Enoch had return'd, a
 languor came
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradu-
 ally
 Weakening the man, till he could
 do no more,
 But kept the house, his chair, and
 last his bed.
 And Enoch bore his weakness
 cheerfully.
 For sure no gladlier does the
 stranded wreck
 See thro' the grey skirts of a lifting
 squall
 The boat that bears the hope of
 life approach
 To save the life despair'd of, than
 he saw
 Death dawning on him, and the
 close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd
 a kindlier hope
 On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,
 Then may she learn I loved her to
 the last.'
 He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane
 and said,
 'Woman, I have a secret—only
 swear,
 Before I tell you—swear upon the
 book
 Not to reveal it, till you see me
 dead.'
 'Dead' clamour'd the good woman,
 'hear him talk!
 I warrant, man, that we shall
 bring you round.'
 'Swear' added Enoch sternly 'on
 the book.'
 And on the book, half-frighted,
 Miriam swore.
 Then Enoch rolling his grey eyes
 upon her,
 'Did you know Enoch Arden of
 this town?'
 'Know him?' she said, 'I knew
 him far away.
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down
 the street;
 Held his head high, and cared for
 no man, he.'
 Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd
 her:

'His head is low, and no man cares
 for him.
 I think I have not three days
 more to live;
 I am the man.' At which the
 woman gave
 A half-incredulous, half-hysterical
 cry.
 'You Arden, you! nay,—sure he
 was a foot
 Higher than you be.' Enoch said
 again,
 'My God has bow'd me down to
 what I am;
 My grief and solitude have broken
 me;
 Nevertheless, know you that I am
 he
 Who married—but that name has
 twice been changed—
 I married her who married Philip
 Ray.
 Sit, listen.' Then he told her of
 his voyage,
 His wreck, his lonely life, his
 coming back,
 His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
 And how he kept it. As the
 woman heard,
 Fast flow'd the current of her
 easy tears,
 While in her heart she yearn'd
 incessantly
 To rush abroad all round the little
 haven,
 Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his
 woes;
 But awed and promise-bounden
 she forbore,
 Saying only 'See your bairns
 before you go!
 Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and
 arose
 Eager to bring them down, for
 Enoch hung
 A moment on her words, but then
 replied:

'Woman, disturb me not now
 at the last,
 But let me hold my purpose till
 I die.
 Sit down again; mark me and
 understand,

While I have power to speak. I
 charge you now,
 When you shall see her, tell her
 that I died
 Blessing her, praying for her,
 loving her;
 Save for the bar between us,
 loving her
 As when she laid her head beside
 my own.
 And tell my daughter Annie,
 whom I saw
 So like her mother, that my latest
 breath
 Was spent in blessing her and
 praying for her.
 And tell my son that I died bless-
 ing him.
 And say to Philip that I blest him
 too;
 He never meant us anything but
 good.
 But if my children care to see me
 dead,
 Who hardly knew me living, let
 them come,
 I am their father; but she must
 not come,
 For my dead face would vex her
 after-life.
 And now there is but one of all
 my blood
 Who will embrace me in the
 world-to-be :
 This hair is his : she cut it off
 and gave it,
 And I have borne it with me all
 these years,
 And thought to bear it with me
 to my grave;
 But now my mind is changed, for
 I shall see him,
 My babe in bliss : wherefore when
 I am gone,
 Take, give her this, for it may
 comfort her :
 It will moreover be a token to her,
 That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
 Made such a voluble answer
 promising all,
 That once again he roll'd his eyes
 upon her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once
 again
 She promised.

Then the third night after
 this,
 While Enoch slumber'd motionless
 and pale,
 And Miriam watch'd and dozed
 at intervals,
 There came so loud a calling of
 the sea,
 That all the houses in the haven
 rang.
 He woke, he rose, he spread his
 arms abroad
 Crying with a loud voice 'a sail !
 a sail !
 I am saved'; and so fell back and
 spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul
 away.
 And when they buried him the
 little port
 Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames; and, gilded
 dust, our pride
 Looks only for a moment whole
 and sound;
 Like that long-buried body of the
 king,
 Found lying with his urns and
 ornaments,
 Which at a touch of light, an air
 of heaven,
 Slipt into ashes and was found no
 more.

Here is a story which in rougher
 shape
 Came from a grizzled cripple,
 whom I saw
 Sunning himself in a waste field
 alone—

Old, and a mine of memories—
 who had served,
 Long since, a bygone Rector of
 the place,
 And been himself a part of what
 he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that
 almighty man,
 The county God—in whose capa-
 cious hall,
 Hung with a hundred shields, the
 family tree
 Sprang from the midriff of a
 prostrate king—
 Whose blazing wyvern weather-
 cock'd the spire,
 Stood from his walls and wing'd
 his entry-gates
 And swang besides on many a
 windy sign—
 Whose eyes from under a pyra-
 midal head
 Saw from his windows nothing
 save his own—
 What lovelier of his own had he
 than her,
 His only child, his Edith, whom
 he loved
 As heiress and not heir regretfully?
 But 'he that marries her marries
 her name'
 This fiat somewhat soothed him-
 self and wife,
 His wife a faded beauty of the
 Baths,
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card;
 Her all of thought and bearing
 hardly more
 Than his own shadow in a sickly
 sun.

A land of hops and poppy-
 mingled corn,
 Little about it stirring save a
 brook!
 A sleepy land where under the
 same wheel
 The same old rut would deepen
 year by year;
 Where almost all the village had
 one name;
 Where Aylmer follow'd Aylmer at
 the Hall

And Averill Averill at the Rectory
 Thrice over; so that Rectory and
 Hall,
 Bound in an immemorial in-
 timacy,
 Were open to each other; tho'
 to dream
 That Love could bind them closer
 well had made
 The hoar hair of the Baronet
 bristle up
 With horror, worse than had he
 heard his priest
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons
 of men
 Daughters of God; so sleepy was
 the land.

And might not Averill, had he
 will'd it so,
 Somewhere beneath his own low
 range of roofs,
 Have also set his many-shielded
 tree?
 There was an Aylmer-Averill
 marriage once,
 When the red rose was redder than
 itself,
 And York's white rose as red as
 Lancaster's,
 With wounded peace which each
 had prick'd to death.
 'Not proven' Averill said, or
 laughingly
 'Some other race of Averills'—
 prov'n or no,
 What cared he? what, if other or
 the same?
 He lean'd not on his fathers but
 himself.
 But Leolin, his brother, living
 oft
 With Averill, and a year or two
 before
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd
 away
 By one low voice to one dear
 neighbourhood,
 Would often, in his walks with
 Edith, claim
 A distant kinship to the gracious
 blood
 That shook the heart of Edith
 hearing him.

Sanguine he was: a but less
 vivid hue
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-
 bloom
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager
 eyes, that still
 Took joyful note of all things
 joyful, beam'd,
 Beneath a manelike mass of rolling
 gold,
 Their best and brightest, when
 they dwelt on hers,
 Edith, whose pensive beauty,
 perfect else,
 But subject to the season or the
 mood,
 Shone like a mystic star between
 the less
 And greater glory varying to and
 fro,
 We know not wherefore; bounte-
 ously made,
 And yet so finely, that a troublous
 touch
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin
 her in a day,
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the
 light.
 And these had been together from
 the first.
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years
 after, hers:
 So much the boy foreran; but
 when his date
 Doubled her own, for want of
 playmates, he
 (Since Averill was a decad and a
 half
 His elder, and their parents
 underground)
 Had tost his ball and flown his
 kite, and roll'd
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with
 her dipt
 Against the rush of the air in the
 prone swing,
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain,
 arranged
 Her garden, sow'd her name and
 kept it green
 In living letters, told her fairy
 tales,
 Show'd her the fairy footings on
 the grass,

The little dells of cowslip, fairy
 palms,
 The petty maretail forest, fairy
 pines,
 Or from the tiny pitted target
 blew
 What look'd a flight of fairy
 arrows aim'd
 All at one mark, all hitting:
 make-believes
 For Edith and himself: or else he
 forged,
 But that was later, boyish his-
 tories
 Of battle, bold adventure, dun-
 geon, wreck,
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues,
 and true love
 Crown'd after trial; sketches rude
 and faint,
 But where a passion yet unborn
 perhaps
 Lay hidden as the music of the
 moon
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the
 nightingale.
 And thus together, save for college
 times
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple,
 fair
 As ever painter painted, poet
 sang,
 Or Heav'n in lavish bounty
 moulded, grew.
 And more and more, the maiden
 woman-grown,
 He wasted hours with Averill;
 there, when first
 The tented winter-field was broken
 up
 Into that phalanx of the summer
 spears
 That soon should wear the gar-
 land; there again
 When burr and bine were gather'd;
 lastly there
 At Christmas; ever welcome at the
 Hall,
 On whose dull sameness his full
 tide of youth
 Broke with a phosphorescence
 cheering even
 My lady; and the Baronet yet had
 laid

No bar between them : dull and
 self-involved,
 Tall and erect, but bending from
 his height
 With half-allowing smiles for all
 the world,
 And mighty courteous in the main
 —his pride
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his
 ring—
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmer-
 ism,
 Would care no more for Leolin's
 walking with her
 Than for his old Newfoundland's
 when they ran
 To loose him at the stables, for he
 rose
 Twofooted at the limit of his
 chain,
 Roaring to make a third : and
 how should Love,
 Whom the cross-lightnings of four
 chance-met eyes
 Flash into fiery life from nothing,
 follow
 Such dear familiarities of
 dawn ?
 Seldom, but when he does, Master
 of all.

So these young hearts not know-
 ing that they loved,
 Not she at least, nor conscious of
 a bar
 Between them, nor by plight or
 broken ring
 Bound, but an immemorial in-
 timacy,
 Wander'd at will, but oft accom-
 panied
 By Averill : his, a brother's love,
 that hung
 With wings of brooding shelter
 o'er her peace,
 Might have been other, save for
 Leolin's—
 Who knows ? but so they wan-
 der'd, hour by hour
 Gather'd the blossom that re-
 bloom'd, and drank
 The magic cup that fill'd itself
 anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her t
 herself.
 For out beyond her lodges, where
 the brook
 Vocal, with here and there
 silence, ran
 By sallowy rims, arose the la-
 bourers' homes,
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low
 knolls
 That dimpling died into each
 other, huts
 At random scatter'd, each a nest
 in bloom.
 Her art, her hand, her counsel a-
 had wrought
 About them : here was one that
 summer-blanch'd,
 Was parcel-bearded with the tra-
 veller's joy
 In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad ; and
 here
 The warm-blue breathings of
 hidden hearth
 Broke from a bower of vine and
 honeysuckle :
 One look'd all rosetree, and
 another wore
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown
 with stars :
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflower
 About it ; this, a milky-way o-
 ver earth,
 Like visions in the Northern
 dreamer's heavens,
 A lily-avenue climbing to the
 doors ;
 One, almost to the martin-haunted
 eaves
 A summer burial deep in holy
 hocks ;
 Each, its own charm ; and Edith
 everywhere ;
 And Edith ever visitant with him
 He but less loved than Edith, and
 her poor :
 For she—so lowly-lovely and so
 loving,
 Queenly responsive when the
 loyal hand
 Rose from the clay it work'd in
 she past,
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and
 passing by,

Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,
 A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;
 He, loved for her and for himself.
 A grasp
 Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,
 A childly way with children, and a laugh
 Ringing like proven golden coin-age true,
 Were no false passport to that easy realm,
 Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
 Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
 Heard the good mother softly whisper 'Bless,
 God bless 'em: marriages are made in Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
 My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,
 Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,
 Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he dash'd
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
 Of patron 'Good! my lady's kinsman! good!'

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
 To listen: unawares they flitted off,
 Busying themselves about the flowerage
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days.
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life:
 Till Leolin, ever watchful of her eye,
 Hated him with a momentary hate.
 Wife hunting, as the rumour ran, was he:
 I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd
 His oriental gifts on everyone
 And most on Edith: like a storm he came,
 And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
 When others had been tested) there was one,
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
 Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,
 Nor of what race, the work; but as he told
 The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
 He got it; for their captain after fight,

His comrades having fought their
last below,
Was climbing up the valley; at
whom he shot :
Down from the beetling crag to
which he clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his
feet,
This dagger with him, which when
now admired
By Edith whom his pleasure was
to please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded
to her.

And Leolin, coming after he
was gone,
Tost over all her presents petu-
lantly :
And when she show'd the wealthy
scabbard, saying
'Look what a lovely piece of
workmanship !'
Slight was his answer 'Well—I
care not for it :'
Then playing with the blade he
prick'd his hand,
'A gracious gift to give a lady,
this !'
'But would it be more gracious'
ask'd the girl
'Were I to give this gift of his to
one
That is no lady ?' 'Gracious ? No,'
said he.
'Me ?—but I cared not for it.
O pardon me,
I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'
'Take it,' she added sweetly, 'tho'
his gift ;
For I am more ungracious ev'n
than you,
I care not for it either ;' and he said
'Why then I love it :' but Sir
Aylmer past,
And neither loved nor liked the
thing he heard.

The next day came a neighbour.
Blues and reds
They talk'd of : blues were sure
of it, he thought :
Then of the latest fox—where
started—kill'd

In such a bottom : 'Peter had the
brush,
My Peter, first' : and did Sir
Aylmer know
That great pock-pitten fellow had
been caught ?
Then made his pleasure echo
hand to hand,
And rolling as it were the sub-
stance of it
Between his palms a moment up
and down—
'The birds were warm, the birds
were warm upon him ;
We have him now :' and had Sir
Aylmer heard—
Nay, but he must—the land was
ringing of it—
This blacksmith-border marriage
—one they knew—
Raw from the nursery—who could
trust a child ?
That cursed France with her
egalities !
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially
With nearing chair and lower'd
accent) think—
For people talk'd—that it was
wholly wise
To let that handsome fellow
Averill walk
So freely with his daughter
people talk'd—
The boy might get a notion into
him ;
The girl might be entangled ere
she knew.
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffen-
ing spoke :
'The girl and boy, Sir, know their
differences !'
'Good,' said his friend, 'but
watch !' and he 'enough,
More than enough, Sir ! I can
guard my own.'
They parted, and Sir Aylmer
Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of
the house
Had fallen first, was Edith that
same night ;
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter,
rough piece

Of early rigid colour, under which
 Withdrawing by the counter door
 to that
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast
 back upon him
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd.
 He, as one
 Caught in a burst of unexpected
 storm,
 And pelted with outrageous
 epithets,
 Turning beheld the Powers of the
 House
 On either side the hearth, in-
 dignant; her,
 Cooling her false cheek with a
 feather-fan,
 Him, glaring, by his own stale
 devil spurr'd,
 And, like a beast hard-ridden,
 breathing hard.
 'Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,
 Presumptuous ! trusted as he was
 with her,
 The sole succeder to their wealth,
 their lands,
 The last remaining pillar of their
 house,
 The one transmitter of their
 ancient name,
 Their child.' 'Our child !' 'Our
 heiress !' 'Ours !' for still,
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,
 came
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he
 said,
 'Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes
 are to make.
 I swear you shall not make them
 out of mine.
 Now inasmuch as you have
 practised on her,
 Perplext her, made her half forget
 herself,
 Swerve from her duty to herself
 and us—
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd
 impossible,
 Far as we track ourselves—I say
 that this—
 Else I withdraw favour and
 countenance
 From you and yours for ever—
 shall you do.

Sir, when you see her—but you
 shall not see her—
 No, you shall write, and not to her,
 but me :
 And you shall say that having
 spoken with me,
 And after look'd into yourself, you
 find
 That you meant nothing—as in-
 deed you know
 That you meant nothing. Such a
 match as this !
 Impossible, prodigious !' These
 were words,
 As meted by his measure of him-
 self,
 Arguing boundless forbearance :
 after which,
 And Leolin's horror-stricken an-
 swer, 'I
 So foul a traitor to myself and
 her,
 Never oh never,' for about as
 long
 As the wind-hover hangs in
 balance, paused
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the
 storm within,
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy,
 and crying
 'Boy, should I find you by my
 doors again,
 My men shall lash you from them
 like a dog ;
 Hence !' with a sudden execration
 drove
 The footstool from before him, and
 arose ;
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of
 teeth that ground
 As in a dreadful dream, while
 Leolin still
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce
 old man
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel
 stood
 Storming with lifted hands, a
 hoary face
 Meet for the reverence of the
 hearth, but now,
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd
 moon,
 Vext with unworthy madness, and
 deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the
 rageful eye
 That watch'd him, till he heard the
 ponderous door
 Close, crashing with long echoes
 thro' the land,
 Went Leolin; then, his passions
 all in flood
 And masters of his motion, furiously
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his
 brother's ran,
 And foam'd away his heart at
 Averill's ear :
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,
 amazed :
 The man was his, had been his
 father's, friend :
 He must have seen, himself had
 seen it long ;
 He must have known, himself had
 known : besides,
 He never yet had set his daughter
 forth
 Here in the woman-markets of the
 west,
 Where our Caucasians let them-
 selves be sold.
 Some one, he thought, had slan-
 der'd Leolin to him.
 'Brother, for I have loved you
 more as son
 Than brother, let me tell you : I
 myself—
 What is their pretty saying ?
 jilted, is it ?
 Jilted I was : I say it for your
 peace.
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself
 the shame
 The woman should have borne,
 humiliated,
 I lived for years a stunted sunless
 life ;
 Till after our good parents past
 away
 Watching your growth, I seem'd
 again to grow.
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying
 you :
 The very whitest lamb in all my
 fold
 Loves you : I know her : the
 worst thought she has

Is whiter even than her pretty
 hand :
 She must prove true : for, brother
 where two fight
 The strongest wins, and truth and
 love are strength,
 And you are happy : let her
 parents be.'

But Leolin cried out the more
 upon them—
 Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heir-
 ess, wealth,
 Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth
 enough was theirs
 For twenty matches. Were he lord
 of this,
 Why twenty boys and girls should
 marry on it,
 And forty blest ones bless him, and
 himself
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He
 believed
 This filthy marriage - hinderin'
 Mammon made
 The harlot of the cities : natur'
 crost
 Was mother of the foul adulteries
 That saturate soul with body
 Name, too ! name,
 Their ancient name ! they might
 be proud ; its worth
 Was being Edith's. Ah how pale
 she had look'd
 Darling, to-night ! they must have
 rated her
 Beyond all tolerance. These old
 pheasant-lords,
 These partridge-breeders of a thou-
 sand years,
 Who had mildew'd in their thou-
 sands, doing nothing
 Since Egbert—why, the greater
 their disgrace !
 Fall back upon a name ! rest, re-
 in that !
 Not keep it noble, make it nobler
 fools,
 With such a vantage ground for
 nobleness !
 He had known a man, a quinte-
 sence of man,
 The life of all—who madly loved—
 and he,

Thwarted by one of these old
 father-fools,
 Had rioted his life out, and made
 an end.
 He would not do it! her sweet
 face and faith
 Held him from that: but he had
 powers, he knew it:
 Back would he to his studies,
 make a name,
 Name, fortune too: the world
 should ring of him
 To shame these mouldy Aylmers
 in their graves:
 Chancellor, or what is greatest
 would he be—
 'O brother, I am grieved to learn
 your grief—
 Give me my fling, and let me say
 my say.'

At which, like one that sees his
 own excess,
 And easily forgives it as his
 own,
 He laugh'd; and then was mute;
 but presently
 Wept, like a storm: and honest
 Averill seeing
 How low his brother's mood had
 fallen, fetch'd
 His richest beeswing from a binn
 reserved
 For banquets, praised the waning
 red, and told
 The vintage—when *this* Aylmer
 came of age—
 Then drank and past it; till at
 length the two,
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,
 agreed
 That much allowance must be
 made for men.
 After an angry dream this kindlier
 glow
 Faded with morning, but his pur-
 pose held.

Yet once by night again the
 lovers met,
 A perilous meeting under the tall
 pines
 That darken'd all the northward
 of her hall.

Him, to her meek and modest
 bosom prest
 In agony, she promised that no
 force,
 Persuasion, no, nor death could
 alter her:
 He, passionately hopefuller, would
 go,
 Labour for his own Edith, and
 return
 In such a sunlight of prosperity
 He should not be rejected. 'Write
 to me!
 They loved me, and because I love
 their child
 They hate me: there is war be-
 tween us, dear,
 Which breaks all bonds but ours;
 we must remain
 Sacred to one another.' So they
 talk'd,
 Poor children, for their comfort:
 the wind blew;
 The rain of heaven, and their own
 bitter tears,
 Tears, and the careless rain of
 heaven, mixt
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd
 each other
 In darkness, and above them
 roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task
 ourselves
 To learn a language known but
 smatteringly
 In phrases here and there at ran-
 dom, toil'd
 Mastering the lawless science of
 our law,
 That codeless myriad of precedent,
 That wilderness of single instances
 Thro' which a few, by wit or for-
 tune led,
 May beat a pathway out to wealth
 and fame.
 The jests, that flash'd about the
 pleader's room,
 Lightning of the hour, the pun,
 the scurrilous tale,—
 Old scandals buried now seven
 decads deep
 In other scandals that have lived
 and died,

And left the living scandal that
 shall die—
 Were dead to him already; bent
 as he was
 To make disproof of scorn, and
 strong in hopes,
 And prodigal of all brain-labour
 he,
 Charier of sleep, and wine, and
 exercise,
 Except when for a breathing-
 while at eve,
 Some niggard fraction of an hour,
 he ran
 Beside the river-bank: and then
 indeed
 Harder the times were, and the
 hands of power
 Were bloodier, and the according
 hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too; but the soft
 river breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that
 rival rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remember-
 ing
 His former talks with Edith, on
 him breathed
 Far purelier in his rushings to and
 fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood
 with air,
 Then to his books again. My
 lady's cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pension'd
 afternoon,
 Drove in upon the student once
 or twice,
 Ran a Malayan muck against the
 times,
 Had golden hopes for France and
 all mankind,
 Answer'd all queries touching
 those at home
 With a heaved shoulder and a
 saucy smile,
 And fain had haled him out into
 the world,
 And air'd him there: his nearer
 friend would say
 'Screw not the chord too sharply
 lest it snap.'
 Then left alone he pluck'd her
 dagger forth

From where his worldless heart
 had kept it warm,
 Kissing his vows upon it like
 knight.
 And wrinkled benchers ofte
 talk'd of him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his
 rise:
 For heart, I think, help'd head
 her letters too,
 Tho' far between, and coming
 fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she
 found
 Or made occasion, being strictly
 watch'd,
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth
 till he saw
 An end, a hope, a light breaking
 upon him.

But they that cast her spirit
 into flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters
 plagued themselves
 To sell her, those good parents
 for her good.
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or
 wealth
 Might lie within their compass
 him they lured
 Into their net made pleasant by
 the baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him
 to woo.
 So month by month the noise
 about their doors,
 And distant blaze of those du-
 banquets, made
 The nightly wirer of their innocent
 hare
 Falter before he took it. All in
 vain.
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wrought
 return'd
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their
 suit
 So often, that the folly taking
 wings
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down
 the wind
 With rumour, and became in
 other fields

A mockery to the yeomen over
 ale,
 And laughter to their lords : but
 those at home,
 As hunters round a hunted crea-
 ture draw
 The cordon close and closer toward
 the death,
 Narrow'd her goings out and
 comings in ;
 Forbad her first the house of
 Averill,
 Then closed her access to the
 wealthier farms,
 Last from her own home circle of
 the poor
 They barr'd her : yet she bore it :
 yet her cheek
 Kept colour : wondrous ! but,
 O mystery !
 What amulet drew her down to
 that old oak,
 So old, that twenty years before,
 a part
 Falling had let appear the brand
 of John—
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a
 tree, but now
 The broken base of a black tower,
 a cave
 Of touchwood, with a single
 flourishing spray.
 There the manorial lord too
 curiously
 Raking in that millennial touch-
 wood-dust
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-
 trove ;
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal,
 and read
 Writhing a letter from his child,
 for which
 Came at the moment Leolin's
 emissary,
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd
 to fly,
 But scared with threats of jail and
 halter gave
 To him that fluster'd his poor
 parish wits
 The letter which he brought, and
 swore besides
 To play their go-between as here-
 tofore

Nor let them know themselves
 betray'd ; and then,
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to
 him, went
 Hating his own lean heart and
 miserable.

Thence forward oft from out a
 despot dream
 The father panting woke, and oft,
 as dawn
 Aroused the black republic on
 his elms,
 Sweeping the frothfly from the
 fescue brush'd
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his
 treasure-trove,
 Seized it, took home, and to my
 lady,—who made
 A downward crescent of her
 minion mouth,
 Listless in all despondence,—read ;
 and tore,
 As if the living passion symbol'd
 there
 Were living nerves to feel the rent ;
 and burnt,
 Now chafing at his own great self
 defied,
 Now striking on huge stumbling
 blocks of scorn
 In babyisms, and dear diminu-
 tives
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
 Of such a love as like a chidden
 child,
 After much wailing, hush'd itself
 at last
 Hopeless of answer : then tho'
 Averill wrote
 And bade him with good heart
 sustain himself—
 All would be well—the lover
 heeded not,
 But passionately restless came and
 went,
 And rustling once at night about
 the place,
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly
 hurt,
 Raging return'd : nor was it well
 for her
 Kept to the garden now, and grove
 of pines,

Watch'd even there; and one was
 set to watch
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer
 watch'd them all,
 Yet bitterer from his readings :
 once indeed,
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking
 pride in her,
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her
 tenderly
 Not knowing what possess'd him :
 that one kiss
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon
 earth;
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd
 suit,
 Seem'd hope's returning rose : and
 then ensued
 A Martin's summer of his faded
 love,
 Or ordeal by kindness; after
 this
 He seldom crost his child without
 a sneer;
 The mother flow'd in shallower
 acrimonies :
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly
 word :
 So that the gentle creature shut
 from all
 Her charitable use, and face to
 face
 With twenty months of silence,
 slowly lost
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold
 on life.
 Last, some low fever ranging round
 to spy
 The weakness of a people or a
 house,
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or
 deer, or men,
 Or almost all that is, hurting the
 hurt—
 Save Christ as we believe him—
 found the girl
 And flung her down upon a couch
 of fire,
 Where careless of the household
 faces near,
 And crying upon the name of
 Leolin,
 She, and with her the race of
 Aylmer, past.

Star to star vibrates light : may
 soul to soul
 Strike thro' a finer element of her
 own ?
 So,—from afar,—touch as at once ?
 or why
 That night, that moment, when
 she named his name,
 Did the keen shriek 'yes love, yes
 Edith, yes,'
 Shri!ll, till the comrade of his
 chambers woke,
 And came upon him half-arisen
 from sleep,
 With a weird bright eye, sweating
 and trembling,
 His hair as it were crackling into
 flames,
 His body half flung forward in
 pursuit,
 And his long arms stretch'd as to
 grasp a flyer :
 Nor knew he wherefore he had
 made the cry;
 And being much befool'd and
 idioted
 By the rough amity of the other,
 sank
 As into sleep again. The second
 day,
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing
 in,
 A breaker of the bitter news from
 home,
 Found a dead man, a letter edged
 with death
 Beside him, and the dagger which
 himself
 Gave Edith, redden'd with no
 bandit's blood :
 'From Edith' was engraven on the
 blade.

Then Averill went and gazed
 upon his death.
 And when he came again, his flock
 believed—
 Beholding how the years which are
 not Time's
 Had blasted him—that many
 thousand days
 Were clipt by horror from his
 term of life.

Yet the sad mother, for the second
 death
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that near-
 ness of the first,
 And being used to find her pastor
 texts,
 Sent to the harrow'd brother,
 praying him
 To speak before the people of her
 child,
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that
 day rose :
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the
 faded woods
 Was all the life of it; for hard on
 these,
 A breathless burthen of low-folded
 heavens
 Stifed and chill'd at once: but
 every roof
 Sent out a listener: many too had
 known
 Edith among the hamlets round,
 and since
 The parents' harshness and the
 hapless loves
 And double death were widely
 murmur'd, left
 Their own grey tower, or plain-
 faced tabernacle,
 To hear him; all in mourning
 these, and those
 With blots of it about them,
 ribbon, glove
 Or kerchief; while the church,—
 one night, except
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the
 lancets,—made
 Still paler the pale head of him,
 who tower'd
 Above them, with his hopes in
 either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd
 Averill,
 His face magnetic to the hand
 from which
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and
 labour'd thro'
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the
 verse 'Behold,
 Your house is left unto you
 desolate!'

But lapsed into so long a pause
 again
 As half amazed half frightened all
 his flock :
 Then from his height and loneli-
 ness of grief
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd
 his angry heart
 Against the desolations of the
 world.

Never since our bad earth
 became one sea,
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of
 the proud,
 And all but those who knew the
 living God—
 Eight that were left to make a
 purer world—
 When since had flood, fire, earth-
 quake, thunder, wrought
 Such waste and havoc as the
 idolatries,
 Which from the low light of
 mortality
 Shot up their shadows to the
 Heaven of Heavens,
 And worshipt their own darkness
 as the Highest ?
 'Gash thyself, priest, and honour
 thy brute Baäl,
 And to thy worst self sacrifice
 thyself,
 For with thy worst self hast thou
 clothed thy God.
 Then came a Lord in no wise like
 to Baäl.
 The babe shall lead the lion.
 Surely now
 The wilderness shall blossom as
 the rose.
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship
 thine own lusts!—
 No coarse and blockish God of
 acreage
 Stands at thy gate for thee to
 grovel to—
 Thy God is far diffused in noble
 groves
 And princely halls, and farms,
 and flowing lawns,
 And heaps of living gold that daily
 grow,

And title-scrolls and gorgeous
 heraldries.
 In such a shape dost thou behold
 thy God.
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for
him; for thine
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a
 hair
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even
 while
 The deathless ruler of thy dying
 house
 Is wounded to the death that
 cannot die;
 And tho' thou numberest with
 the followers
 Of One who cried "leave all and
 follow me."
 Thee therefore with His light
 about thy feet,
 Thee with His message ringing in
 thine ears,
 Thee shall thy brother man, the
 Lord from Heaven,
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's
 son,
 Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the
 Mighty God,
 Count the more base idolater of
 the two;
 Crueller: as not passing thro' the
 fire
 Bodies, but souls—thy children's
 —thro' the smoke,
 The blight of low desires—darken-
 ing thine own
 To thine own likeness; or if one
 of these,
 Thy better born unhappily from
 thee,
 Should, as by miracle, grow
 straight and fair—
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such
 a one
 By those who most have cause to
 sorrow for her—
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy
 well,
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields
 of corn,
 Fair as the Angel that said "hail"
 she seem'd,
 Who entering fill'd the house with
 sudden light.

For so mine own was brighten'd :
 where indeed
 The roof so lowly but that beam
 of Heaven
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the door-
 way ? whose the babe
 Too ragged to be fondled on her
 lap,
 Warm'd at her bosom ? The poor
 child of shame,
 The common care whom no one
 cared for, leapt
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten
 heart,
 As with the mother he had never
 known,
 In gambols; for her fresh and
 innocent eyes
 Had such a star of morning in
 their blue,
 That all neglected places of the
 field
 Broke into nature's music when
 they saw her.
 Low was her voice, but won
 mysterious way
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a
 louder one
 Was all but silence—free of alms
 her hand—
 The hand that robed your cottage
 walls with flowers
 Has often toil'd to clothe your
 little ones;
 How often placed upon the sick
 man's brow
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow
 smooth !
 Had you one sorrow and she
 shared it not ?
 One burthen and she would not
 lighten it ?
 One spiritual doubt she did not
 soothe ?
 Or when some heat of difference
 sparkled out,
 How sweetly would she glide
 between your wraths,
 And steal you from each other !
 for she walk'd
 Wearing the light yoke of that
 Lord of love,

Who still'd the rolling wave of
Galilee!
And one—of him I was not bid to
speak—
Was always with her, whom you
also knew.
Him too you loved, for he was
worthy love.
And these had been together from
the first;
They might have been together
till the last.
Friends, this frail bark of ours,
when sorely tried,
May wreck itself without the
pilot's guilt,
Without the captain's knowledge :
hope with me.
Whose shame is that, if he went
hence with shame?
Nor mine the fault, if losing both
of these
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd
walls,
"My house is left unto me deso-
late."

While thus he spoke, his hearers
wept; but some,
Sons of the glebe, with other
frowns than those
That knit themselves for summer
shadow, scowl'd
At their great lord. He, when it
seem'd he saw
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar,
but fork'd
Of the near storm, and aiming at
his head,
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow,
soldier-like,
Erect: but when the preacher's
cadence flow'd
Softening thro' all the gentle at-
tributes
Of his lost child, the wife, who
watch'd his face,
Paled at a sudden twitch of his
iron mouth;
And 'O pray God that he hold up,'
she thought,
'Or surely I shall shame myself
and him.'

'Nor yours the blame—for who
beside your hearths
Can take her place—if echoing me
you cry
"Our house is left unto us deso-
late"?'
But thou, O thou that killest,
hadst thou known,
O thou that stonest, hadst thou
understood
The things belonging to thy peace
and ours!
Is there no prophet but the voice
that calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste
"Repent"?'
Is not our own child on the narrow
way,
Who down to those that saunter
in the broad
Cries "come up hither," as a
prophet to us?
Is there no stoning save with flint
and rock?
Yes, as the dead we weep for
testify—
No desolation but by sword and
fire?
Yes, as your moanings witness,
and myself
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for
my loss.
Give me your prayers, for he is
past your prayers,
Not past the living fount of pity
in Heaven.
But I that thought myself long-
suffering, meek,
Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how
the words
Have twisted back upon them-
selves, and mean
Vileness, we are grown so proud—
I wish'd my voice
A rushing tempest of the wrath of
God
To blow these sacrifices thro' the
world—
Sent like the twelve-divided con-
cubine
To inflame the tribes: but there—
out yonder—earth
Lightens from her own central
Hell—O there

'The red fruit of an old idolatry—
 The heads of chiefs and princes
 fall so fast,
 They cling together in the ghastly
 sack—
 The land all shambles—naked
 marriages
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-
 murder'd France,
 By shores that darken with the
 gathering wolf,
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick
 sea.
 Is this a time to madden madness
 then ?
 Was this a time for these to flaunt
 their pride ?
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as
 dense as those
 Which hid the Holiest from the
 people's eyes
 Ere the great death, shroud this
 great sin from all !
 Doubtless our narrow world must
 canvass it :
 O rather pray for those and pity
 them,
 Who, thro' their own desire accom-
 plish'd, bring
 Their own grey hairs with sorrow
 to the grave—
 Who broke the bond which they
 desired to break,
 Which else had link'd their race
 with times to come—
 Who wove coarse webs to snare
 her purity,
 Grossly contriving their dear
 daughter's good—
 Poor souls, and knew not what
 they did, but sat
 Ignorant, devising their own
 daughter's death !
 May not that earthly chastise-
 ment suffice ?
 Have not our love and reverence
 left them bare ?
 Will not another take their heri-
 tage ?
 Will there be children's laughter
 in their hall
 For ever and for ever, or one stone
 Left on another, or is it a light
 thing

That I, their guest, their host, their
 ancient friend,
 I made by these the last of all my
 race,
 Must cry to these the last of theirs,
 as cried
 Christ ere His agony to those that
 swore
 Not by the temple but the gold,
 and made
 Their own traditions God, and
 slew the Lord,
 And left their memories a world's
 curse—"Behold,
 Your house is left unto you
 desolate" ?'

Ended he had not, but she
 brook'd no more :
 Long since her heart had beat
 remorselessly,
 Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her,
 and a sense
 Of meanness in her unresisting
 life.
 Then their eyes vex'd her; for on
 entering
 He had cast the curtains of their
 seat aside—
 Black velvet of the costliest—she
 herself
 Had seen to that : fain had she
 closed them now,
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only
 near'd
 Her husband inch by inch, but
 when she laid,
 Wife-like, her hand in one of his,
 he veil'd
 His face with the other, and at
 once, as falls
 A creeper when the prop is broken,
 fell
 The woman shrieking at his feet,
 and swoon'd.
 Then her own people bore along
 the nave
 Her pendent hands, and narrow
 meagre face
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of
 fifty years :
 And her the Lord of all the land-
 scape round
 Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all

Who peer'd at him so keenly,
 follow'd out
 Tall and erect, but in the middle
 aisle
 Reel'd, as footsore ox in crowded
 ways
 Stumbling across the market to
 his death,
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind,
 and seem'd
 Always about to fall, grasping the
 pews
 And oaken finials till he touch'd
 the door;
 Yet to the lychgate, where his
 chariot stood,
 Strode from the porch, tall and
 erect again.

But nevermore did either pass
 the gate
 Save under pall with bearers. In
 one month,
 Thro' weary and yet ever wearier
 hours,
 The childless mother went to seek
 her child;
 And when he felt the silence of his
 house
 About him, and the change and
 not the change,
 And those fixt eyes of painted
 ancestors
 Staring for ever from their gilded
 walls
 On him their last descendant, his
 own head
 Began to droop, to fall; the man
 became
 Imbecile; his one word was
 'desolate';
 Dead for two years before his
 death was he;
 But when the second Christmas
 came, escaped
 His keepers, and the silence which
 he felt,
 To find a deeper in the narrow
 gloom
 By wife and child; nor wanted at
 his end
 The dark retinue reverencing
 death

At golden thresholds; nor from
 tender hearts,
 And those who sorrow'd o'er a
 vanish'd race,
 Pity, the violet on the tyrant's
 grave.
 Then the great Hall was wholly
 broken down,
 And the broad woodland parcell'd
 into farms;
 And where the two contrived their
 daughter's good,
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has
 made his run,
 The hedgehog underneath the
 plantain bores,
 The rabbit fondles his own harm-
 less face,
 The slow-worm creeps, and the
 thin weasel there
 Follows the mouse, and all is open
 field.

SEA DREAMS

A CITY clerk, but gently born and
 bred;
 His wife, an unknown artist's
 orphan child—
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret,
 three years old :
 They, thinking that her clear
 germander eye
 Droopt in the giant-factoried
 city-gloom,
 Came, with a month's leave given
 them, to the sea :
 For which his gains were dock'd,
 however small :
 Small were his gains, and hard his
 work ; besides,
 Their slender household fortunes
 (for the man
 Had risk'd his little) like the little
 thrift,
 Trembled in perilous places o'er
 a deep :
 And oft, when sitting all alone,
 his face
 Would darken, as he cursed his
 credulousness,
 And that one unctuous mouth
 which lured him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some
 Peruvian mine.
 Now seaward-bound for health
 they gain'd a coast,
 All sand and cliff and deep-
 inrunning cave,
 At close of day; slept, woke, and
 went the next,
 The Sabbath, pious variers from
 the church,
 To chapel; where a heated pul-
 piteer,
 Not preaching simple Christ to
 simple men,
 Announced the coming doom, and
 fulminated
 Against the scarlet woman and
 her creed :
 For sideways up he swung his arms
 and shriek'd
 'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n
 as if he held
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and
 himself
 Were that great Angel; 'Thus
 with violence
 Shall Babylon be cast into the
 sea;
 Then comes the close.' The gentle-
 hearted wife
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a
 world;
 He at his own: but when the
 wordy storm
 Had ended, forth they came and
 paced the shore,
 Ran in and out the long sea-
 framing caves,
 Drank the large air, and saw, but
 scarce believed
 (The sootflake of so many a
 summer still
 Clung to their fancies) that they
 saw, the sea.
 So now on sand they walk'd, and
 now on cliff,
 Lingering about the thymy pro-
 montories,
 Till all the sails were darken'd in
 the west,
 And rosed in the east: then
 homeward and to bed:
 Where she, who kept a tender
 Christian hope,

Haunting a holy text, and still to
 that
 Returning, as the bird returns, at
 night,
 'Let not the sun go down upon
 your wrath,'
 Said, 'Love, forgive him : ' but he
 did not speak;
 And silenced by that silence lay
 the wife,
 Remembering her dear Lord who
 died for all,
 And musing on the little lives of
 men,
 And how they mar this little by
 their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping,
 a full tide
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on
 the foremost rocks
 Touching, upjetted in spirits of
 wild sea-smoke,
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful
 foam, and fell
 In vast sea-cataracts—ever and
 anon
 Dead claps of thunder from within
 the cliffs
 Heard thro' the living roar. At
 this the babe,
 Their Margaret cradled near them,
 wail'd and woke
 The mother, and the father sud-
 denly cried,
 'A wreck, a wreck ! ' then turn'd,
 and groaning said,

'Forgive ! How many will say,
 "forgive," and find
 A sort of absolution in the sound
 To hate a little longer ! No; the
 sin
 That neither God nor man can
 well forgive,
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
 Is it so true that second thoughts
 are best ?
 Not first, and third, which are a
 riper first ?
 Too ripe, too late ! they come too
 late for use.
 Ah love, there surely lives in man
 and beast

Something divine to warn them of
 their foes :
 And such a sense, when first I
 fronted him,
 Said, "Trust him not"; but after,
 when I came
 To know him more, I lost it, knew
 him less;
 Fought with what seem'd my own
 uncharity;
 Sat at his table; drank his costly
 wines;
 Made more and more allowance for
 his talk;
 Went further, fool! and trusted
 him with all,
 All my poor scrapings from a
 dozen years
 Of dust and deskwork : there is no
 such mine,
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallow-
 ing gold,
 Not making. Ruin'd ! ruin'd ! the
 sea roars
 Ruin : a fearful night !'

'Not fearful; fair,'
 Said the good wife, 'if every star
 in heaven
 Can make it fair : you do but hear
 the tide.
 Had you ill dreams ?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd
 Of such a tide swelling toward the
 land,
 And I from out the boundless outer
 deep
 Swept with it to the shore, and
 enter'd one
 Of those dark caves that run
 beneath the cliffs.
 I thought the motion of the
 boundless deep
 Bore through the cave, and I was
 heaved upon it
 In darkness : then I saw one
 lovely star
 Larger and larger. "What a
 world," I thought,
 "To live in!" but in moving on
 I found
 Only the landward exit of the cave,

Bright with the sun upon the
 stream beyond :
 And near the light a giant woman
 sat,
 All over earthy, like a piece of
 earth,
 A pickaxe in her hand : then out
 I slipt
 Into a land all sun and blossom,
 trees
 As high as heaven, and every bird
 that sings :
 And here the night-light flickering
 in my eyes
 Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,'
 she said,
 'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,
 'And mused upon it, drifting up
 the stream
 In fancy, till I slept again, and
 pieced
 The broken vision; for I dream'd
 that still
 The motion of the great deep bore
 me on,
 And that the woman walk'd upon
 the brink :
 I wonder'd at her strength, and
 ask'd her of it :
 "It came," she said, "by working
 in the mines :"
 O then to ask her of my shares, I
 thought;
 And ask'd; but not a word; she
 shook her head.
 And then the motion of the current
 ceased,
 And there was rolling thunder;
 and we reach'd
 A mountain, like a wall of burs
 and thorns;
 But she with her strong feet up the
 steep hill
 Trod out a path : I follow'd; and
 at top
 She pointed seaward : there a
 fleet of glass,
 That seem'd a fleet of jewels under
 me,

Sailing along before a gloomy
cloud
That not one moment ceased to
thunder, past
In sunshine: right across its
track there lay,
Down in the water, a long reef
of gold,
Or what seem'd gold: and I was
glad at first
To think that in our often-
ransack'd world
Still so much gold was left; and
then I fear'd
Lest the gay navy there should
splinter on it,
And fearing waved my arm to
warn them off;
An idle signal, for the brittle
fleet
(I thought I could have died to
save it) near'd,
Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and
vanish'd and I woke,
I heard the clash so clearly. Now
I see
My dream was Life; the woman
honest Work;
And my poor venture but a fleet of
glass
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary
gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to
comfort him,
'You raised your arm, you tum-
bled down and broke
The glass with little Margaret's
medicine in it;
And, breaking that, you made and
broke your dream:
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle
breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband;
'yesterday
I met him suddenly in the street,
and ask'd
That which I ask'd the woman in
my dream.
Like her, he shook his head. "Show
me the books!"

He dodged me with a long and
loose account.
"The books, the books!" but he,
he could not wait,
Bound on a matter he of life and
death:
When the great Books (see Daniel
seven and ten)
Were open'd, I should find he
meant me well;
And then began to bloat himself,
and ooze
All over the fat affectionate
smile
That makes the widow lean. "My
dearest friend,
Have faith, have faith! We live
by faith," said he;
"And all things work together
for the good
Of those"—it makes me sick to
quote him—last
Gript my hand hard, and with
God-bless-you went.
I stood like one that had received
a blow:
I found a hard friend in his loose
accounts,
A loose one in the hard grip of his
hand,
A curse in his God-bless-you:
then my eyes
Pursued him down the street, and
far away,
Among the honest shoulders of
the crowd,
Read rascal in the motions of his
back,
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding
knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?'
said the good wife;
'So are we all: but do not call
him, love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and
proved, forgive.
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs
his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever
bears about
A silent court of justice in his
breast,

Himself the judge and jury, and
himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever
condemn'd :
And that drags down his life :
then comes what comes
Hereafter : and he meant, he
said he meant,
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,
you well.'

"With all his conscience and
one eye askew"—
Love, let me quote these lines,
that you may learn
A man is likewise counsel for
himself,
Too often, in that silent court of
yours—
"With all his conscience and one
eye askew,
So false, he partly took himself for
true ;
Whose pious talk, when most his
heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot
round his eye ;
Who, never naming God except
for gain,
So never took that useful name in
vain ;
Made Him his catspaw and the
Cross his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his
dupe and fool ;
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace
he forged,
And snakelike slimed his victim
ere he gorged ;
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er
the rest
Arising, did his holy oily best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell
and Heaven,
To spread the Word by which
himself had thriven."
How like you this old satire ?'

'Nay,' she said,
'I loathe it : he had never kindly
heart,
Nor ever cared to better his own
kind,

Who first wrote satire, with no
pity in it.
But will you hear *my* dream, for I
had one
That altogether went to music ?
Still
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having
dream'd
Of that same coast.
—But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous
vapour, lay,
And ever in it a low musical
note
Swell'd up and died ; and, as it
swell'd, a ridge
Of breaker issued from the belt,
and still
Grew with the growing note, and
when the note
Had reach'd a thunderous fullness,
on those cliffs
Broke, mixt with awful light (the
same as that
Living within the belt) whereby
she saw
That all those lines of cliffs were
cliffs no more,
But huge cathedral fronts of every
age,
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye
could see,
One after one : and then the great
ridge drew,
Lessening to the lessening music,
back,
And past into the belt and swell'd
again
Slowly to music : ever when it
broke
The statues, king or saint, or
founder fell ;
Then from the gaps and chasms of
ruin left
Came men and women in dark
clusters round,
Some crying, 'Set them up ! they
shall not fall !'
And others 'Let them lie, for they
have fall'n.'
And still they strove and wrangled :
and she grieved

In her strange dream, she knew not
 why, to find
 Their wildest wailings never out
 of tune
 With that sweet note; and ever
 as their shrieks
 Ran highest up the gamut, that
 great wave
 Returning, while none mark'd it,
 on the crowd
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and
 show'd their eyes
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and
 swept away
 The men of flesh and blood, and
 men of stone,
 To the waste deeps together.

‘Then I fixt

My wistful eyes on two fair
 images,
 Both crown'd with stars and high
 among the stars,—
 The Virgin Mother standing with
 her child
 High up on one of those dark
 minster fronts—
 Till she began to totter, and the
 child
 Clung to the mother, and sent out
 a cry
 Which mixt with little Margaret's,
 and I woke,
 And my dream awed me :—well—
 but what are dreams ?
 Yours came but from the breaking
 of a glass,
 And mine but from the crying of
 a child.’

‘Child ? No !’ said he, ‘but this
 tide's roar, and his,
 Our Boanerges with his threats of
 doom,
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylon-
 ianisms
 (Altho' I grant but little music
 there)
 Went both to make your dream :
 but if there were
 A music harmonizing our wild
 cries,
 Sphere-music such as that you
 dream'd about,

Why, that would make our pas-
 sions far too like
 The discords dear to the musician.
 No—
 One shriek of hate would jar all
 the hymns of heaven :
 True Devils with no ear, they howl
 in tune
 With nothing but the Devil !’

“‘True” indeed !

One of our town, but later by an
 hour
 Here than ourselves, spoke with
 me on the shore ;
 While you were running down the
 sands, and made
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-
 furbelow flap,
 Good man, to please the child.
 She brought strange news.
 Why were you silent when I spoke
 to-night ?
 I had set my heart on your for-
 giving him
 Before you knew. We *must* for-
 give the dead.’

‘Dead ! who is dead ?’

‘The man your eye pursued.
 A little after you had parted with
 him,
 He suddenly dropt dead of heart
 disease.’

‘Dead ? he ? of heart disease ?
 what heart had he
 To die of ? dead !’

‘Ah, dearest, if there be
 A devil in man, there is an angel
 too,
 And if he did that wrong you
 charge him with,
 His angel broke his heart. But
 your rough voice
 (You spoke so loud) has roused
 the child again.
 Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she
 not sleep
 Without her “little birdie” ? well
 then, sleep,
 And I will sing you “birdie.”’

Saying this,
 The woman half turn'd round
 from him she loved,
 Left him one hand, and reaching
 thro' the night
 Her other, found (for it was close
 beside)
 And half embraced the basket
 cradle-head
 With one soft arm, which, like the
 pliant bough
 That moving moves the nest and
 nestling, sway'd
 The cradle, while she sang this
 baby song.

What does little birdie say
 In her nest at peep of day ?
 Let me fly, says little birdie,
 Mother, let me fly away.
 Birdie, rest a little longer,
 Till the little wings are stronger.
 So she rests a little longer,
 Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
 In her bed at peep of day ?
 Baby says, like little birdie,
 Let me rise and fly away.
 Baby, sleep a little longer,
 Till the little limbs are stronger.
 If she sleeps a little longer,
 Baby too shall fly away

'She sleeps : let us too, let all evil,
 sleep.
 He also sleeps—another sleep than
 ours.
 He can do no more wrong : forgive
 him, dear,
 And I shall sleep the sounder !'

Then the man,
 'His deeds yet live, the worst is
 yet to come.
 Yet let your sleep for this one
 night be sound :
 I do forgive him !'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,
 'Your own will be the sweeter,'
 and they slept.

THE GRANDMOTHER

I
 AND Willy, my eldest-born, is
 gone, you say, little Anne ?
 Ruddy and white, and strong on
 his legs, he looks like a
 man.
 And Willy's wife has written : she
 never was overwise,
 Never the wife for Willy : he
 wouldn't take my advice.

II
 For, Annie, you see, her father
 was not the man to save,
 Hadn't a head to manage, and
 drank himself into his grave.
 Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I
 was against it for one.
 Eh :—but he wouldn't hear me—
 and Willy, you say, is gone.

III
 Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born,
 the flower of the flock ;
 Never a man could fling him : for
 Willy stood like a rock.
 'Here's a leg for a babe of a
 week !' says doctor ; and he
 would be bound,
 There was not his like that year in
 twenty parishes round.

IV
 Strong of his hands, and strong on
 his legs, but still of his tongue !
 I ought to have gone before him :
 I wonder he went so young.
 I cannot cry for him, Annie : I
 have not long to stay ;
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner,
 for he lived far away.

V
 Why do you look at me, Annie ?
 you think I am hard and
 cold ;
 But all my children have gone
 before me, I am so old :
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can
 I weep for the rest ;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could
 have wept with the best.

VI

For I remember a quarrel I had
 with your father, my dear,
 All for a slanderous story, that
 cost me many a tear.
 I mean your grandfather, Annie :
 it cost me a world of woe,
 Seventy years ago, my darling,
 seventy years ago.

VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come
 to the place, and I knew right
 well
 That Jenny had tript in her time :
 I knew, but I would not tell.
 And she to be coming and slander-
 ing me, the base little liar !
 But the tongue is a fire as you
 know, my dear, the tongue is
 a fire.

VIII

And the parson made it his text
 that week, and he said like-
 wise,
 That a lie which is half a truth is
 ever the blackest of lies,
 That a lie which is all a lie may be
 met and fought with outright,
 But a lie which is part a truth is a
 harder matter to fight.

IX

And Willy had not been down to
 the farm for a week and a day
 And all things look'd half-dead,
 tho' it was the middle of May.
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew
 what Jenny had been !
 But soiling another, Annie, will
 never make oneself clean.

X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind,
 and all of an evening late
 I climb'd to the top of the garth,
 and stood by the road at the
 gate.
 The moon like a rick on fire was
 rising over the dale,
 And whit, whit, whit, in the bush
 beside me chirrup the night-
 ingale.

XI

All of a sudden he stopt : there
 past by the gate of the farm,
 Willy,—he didn't see me,—and
 Jenny hung on his arm.
 Out into the road I started, and
 spoke I scarce knew how ;
 Ah, there's no fool like the old one
 —it makes me angry now.

XII

Willy stood up like a man, and
 look'd the thing that he
 meant ;
 Jenny, the viper, made me a
 mocking curtsey and went.
 And I said, 'Let us part : in a
 hundred years it'll all be the
 same,
 You cannot love me at all, if you
 love not my good name.'

XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes
 all wet, in the sweet moon-
 shine :
 'Sweetheart, I love you so well
 that your good name is mine.
 And what do I care for Jane, let
 her speak of you well or ill ;
 But marry me out of hand : we
 two shall be happy still.'

XIV

'Marry you, Willy !' said I, 'but
 I needs must speak my mind,
 And I fear you'll listen to tales, be
 jealous and hard and unkind.'
 But he turn'd and claspt me in his
 arms, and answer'd, 'No,
 love, no ;'
 Seventy years ago, my darling,
 seventy years ago.

XV

So Willy and I were wedded : I
 wore a lilac gown ;
 And the ringers rang with a will,
 and he gave the ringers a
 crown.
 But the first that ever I bare was
 dead before he was born,
 Shadow and shine is life, little
 Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI

That was the first time, too, that
 ever I thought of death.
 There lay the sweet little body
 that never had drawn a breath.
 I had not wept, little Anne, not
 since I had been a wife;
 But I wept like a child that day,
 for the babe had fought for
 his life.

XVII

His dear little face was troubled,
 as if with anger or pain :
 I look'd at the still little body—
 his trouble had all been in
 vain.
 For Willy I cannot weep, I shall
 see him another morn :
 But I wept like a child for the
 child that was dead before he
 was born.

XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man,
 for he seldom said me nay :
 Kind, like a man, was he; like a
 man, too, would have his way:
 Never jealous—not he: we had
 many a happy year;
 And he died, and I could not weep
 —my own time seem'd so
 near.

XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's
 will that I, too, then could
 have died :
 I began to be tired a little, and
 fain had slept at his side.
 And that was ten years back, or
 more, if I don't forget :
 But as to the children, Annie,
 they're all about me yet.

XX

Pattering over the boards, my
 Annie who left me at two,
 Patter she goes, by own little
 Annie, an Anna like you :
 Pattering over the boards, she
 comes and goes to her will,
 While Harry is in the five-acre and
 Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear
 them too—they sing to their
 team :
 Often they come to the door in a
 pleasant kind of a dream.
 They come and sit by my chair,
 they hover about my bed—
 I am not always certain if they
 be alive or dead.

XXII

And yet I know for a truth,
 there's none of them left
 alive;
 For Harry went at sixty, your
 father at sixty-five :
 And Willy, my eldest born, at
 nigh threescore and ten;
 I knew them all as babies, and now
 they're elderly men.

XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is
 not often I grieve;
 I am oftener sitting at home in my
 father's farm at eve :
 And the neighbours come and
 laugh and gossip, and so do
 I;
 I find myself often laughing at
 things that have long gone
 by.

XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our
 sins should make us sad :
 But mine is a time of peace, and
 there is Grace to be had;
 And God, not man, is the Judge
 of us all when life shall
 cease;
 And in this Book, little Annie, the
 message is one of Peace.

XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it
 be free from pain,
 And happy has been my life; but
 I would not live it again.
 I seem to be tired a little, that's
 all, and long for rest;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could
 have wept with the best.

XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty,
my eldest-born, my flower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he
has but gone for an hour,—
Gone for a minute, my son, from
this room into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What
time have I to be vex't?

XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she
never was overwise.
Get me my glasses, Annie: thank
God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when
I shall have past away.
But stay with the old woman now:
you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and
meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse:
whoy, Doctor's abeän an'
agoän:
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor
yaäle: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my yaäle, for I beänt a-
goin' to break my rule.

II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a
says what's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy
the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry
noight sin' I beän 'ere,
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market
noight for foorty year.

III

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a
sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
'The Amoaighy's a taäkin o' you
to 'issén, my friend,' a said,
An' a tow'd ma my sins, an's toithe
were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done my duty by un, as I 'a done
by the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I
'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cost oop, thot a did, 'bood
Bessy Marris's barn.
Thof a knaws I hallus voäted wi'
Squaire an' choorch an staäte
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wu'
niver agin the raäte.

V

An' I hallus comed to 's choorch
afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eerd un a bummir' awaäy
loike a buzzard-clock¹ ower
my yeäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whota meän'd
but I thowt a 'ad sammut to
saäy,
An I thowt a said whot a owt to
'a said an' I comed awaäy.

VI

Bessy Marris's barn! tha knaws
she laäid it to meä.
Mowt 'a beän. maynap, for she
wur a bad un, skeä.
'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass,
tha mun understond,
I done my duty by un as I 'a
done by the loid.

VII

But Parson a come: an' a goos, an'
a says it eäsy an' freeä
'The Amoaighy's a taäkin' o' you
to 'issén, my friend,' say 'eä.
I weänt saäy mer be loiars, thof
summun saidit in 'aäste:
But a reäds wonnsarmin a weeäk,
an' I 'a stubb'd Thornaby
waäste.

VIII

D'ya moind thewaäste, my lass?
naw, naw, tha was not born
then,
Theer wur a bggle in it, I often
'eerd un rysen;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,² for I
'eerd un 'boot an' 'about,
But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot,
an' raävd an' rembled un oot.

¹Lockchafer²Bittern.

IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun un
theer a-laäid on is' faäce
Doon i' the woild 'enemies¹ afoor
I comed to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby—toner² 'ed
shot un as deääd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at
'soize—but git ma my yaäle.

X

Dubbut looäk at the waäst: theer
warn't not feäd for a cow:
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz,
an' looäk at it now—
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an'
now theer 's lots o' feäd,
Fourscore yows upon it an' some
on it doon in seäd.

XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I
meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at
fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an'
runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud
nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte oondered haäcre
o' Squire's, an' lond o' my
oän.

XII

Do godamoighty know what a's
doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän
an' yonder a peä!
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an'
all—a' dear'a' dear!
And I 'a monaged for Squire
come Michaelmas thirty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäken Joänes, as 'ant
a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäken Robins—a
niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke
meä an' taäke na now
Wi' 'auf the cows to cauve an'
Thornaby holms to plow!

¹ Anemones.² One or other.

XIV

Looäk 'ow quoloty smoiles when
they sees ma a passin' by,
Says to thessén naw doot 'what a
mon a beä sewer-ly!
For they knaws what I beän to
Squire sin fust a comed to
the 'All;
I done my duty by Squire an' I
done my duty by all.

XV

Squire's in Lunnon, an' summun
I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For who's to howd the lond ater
meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt
niver give it to Joänes,
Noither a moänt to Robins—a
niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä
mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed
feälds wi' the Devil's oän teäm.
Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an'
loife they says is sweet,
But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for
I couldn abear to see it.

XVII

What atta stannin' theer for, an'
doesn bring ma the yaäle?
Doctor's a 'tottler, lass, an' a's
hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules for Doctor, a
knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my yaäle I tell tha, an' gin
I mun doy I mun doy.

TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay
and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to
the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and
lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies
the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in
thine arms,

Here at the quiet limit of the
world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming
like a dream
The ever silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming
halls of morn.

Alas! for this grey shadow,
once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy
choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that
he seem'd
To his great heart none other than
a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immor-
tality.'

Then didst thou grant mine asking
with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not
how they give.

But thy strong Hours indignant
work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd
and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me,
left me maim'd

To dwell in presence of immortal
youth,

Immortal age beside immortal
youth,

And all I was, in ashes. Can thy
love,

Thy beauty, make amends, tho'
even now,

Close over us, the silver star, thy
guide,

Shines in those tremulous eyes
that fill with tears

To hear me? Let me go: take
back thy gift:

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of
men,

Or pass beyond the goal of ordin-
ance.

Where all should pause, as is most
meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart;
there comes

A glimpse of that dark world
where I was born.

Once more the old mysterious
glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from
thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart
renew'd.

Thy cheek begins to redden thro'
the gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly
close to mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and
the wild team

Which love thee, yearning for thy
yoke, arise,

And shake the darkness from their
loosen'd manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes
of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest
beautiful

In silence, then before thine
answer given

Departest, and thy tears are on
my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me
with thy tears,

And make me tremble lest
saying learnt,

In days far-off, on that dark earth
be true?

'The Gods themselves cannot
recall their gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what
another heart

In days far-off, and with what
other eyes

I used to watch—if I be he that
watch'd—

The lucid outline forming round
thee; saw

The dim curls kindle into sunny
rings;

Changed with thy mystic change
and felt my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly
crimson'd all

Thy presence and thy portals
while I lay,

Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing
dewy-warm

With kisses balmier than half-
opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips
that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of
wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard
Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into
towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in
thine East :
How can my nature longer mix
with thine ?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,
cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my
wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds,
when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields
about the homes
Of happy men that have the power
to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier
dead.
Release me, and restore me to the
ground :
Thou seest all things, thou wilt
see my grave :
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn
by morn ;
I earth in earth forget these empty
courts,
And thee returning on thy silver
wheels.

THE VOYAGE

I

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour
mouth ;
And madly danced our hearts with
joy,
As fast we fled to the South :
How fresh was every sight and
sound
On open main or winding shore !
We knew the merry world was
round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II

Warm broke the breeze against
the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :
The Lady's-head upon the prow,
Caught the shrill salt, and
sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the
keel,
And swept behind : so quick
the run.
We felt the good ship shake and
reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the
night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd
light !
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward
drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view ;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we
flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving
field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly
seen,
We past long lines of Northern
capes
And dewy Northern meadows
green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we
drove,
Where those long swells of breaker
sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of
clove.

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in
 shade,
 Gloom'd the low coast and
 quivering brine
 With ashy rains, that spreading
 made
 Fantastic plume or sable pine
 By sands and steaming flats, and
 floods
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded
 fast,
 And hills and scarlet-mingled
 woods
 Glow'd for a moment as we past

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the
 bark!
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at
 times
 With wakes of fire we tore the
 dark;
 At times a carven craft would
 shoot
 From havens hid in fairy
 bowers,
 With naked limbs and flowers and
 fruit,
 But we nor paused for fruit nor
 flowers.

VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled
 Down the waste waters day and
 night,
 And still we follow'd where she
 led,
 In hope to gain upon her flight.
 Her face was evermore unseen,
 And fixt upon the far sea-line;
 But each man murmur'd 'O my
 Queen,
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

IX

And now we lost her, now she
 gleam'd
 Like Fancy made of golden air,
 Now nearer to the prow she
 seem'd
 Like Virtue firm, like Know-
 ledge fair,

Now high on waves that idly
 burst
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd
 the sea,
 And now, the bloodless point re-
 versed,
 She bore the blade of Liberty

X

And only one among us—him
 We pleased not—he was seldom
 pleased:
 He saw not far: his eyes were
 dim:
 But ours he swore were
 diseased.
 'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd
 spite,
 'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and
 wept.
 And overboard one stormy night
 He cast his body, and on waves
 swept.

XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd
 Nor anchor dropt at evening
 morn;
 We loved the glories of the world
 But laws of nature were our
 scorn;
 For blasts would rise and rave and
 cease,
 But whence were those that
 drove the sail
 Across the whirlwind's heart
 peace,
 And to and thro' the counter-
 gale?

XII

Again to colder climes we came
 For still we follow'd where she
 led:
 Now mate is blind and captain
 lame,
 And half the crew are sick
 dead.
 But blind or lame or sick or sound
 We follow that which flies before:
 We know the merry world
 round,
 And we may sail for evermore

IN THE VALLEY OF
CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that
 flashest white,
 Deepening thy voice with the
 deepening of the night,
 All along the valley, where thy
 waters flow,
 I walk'd with one I loved two and
 thirty years ago.
 All along the valley, while I walk'd
 to-day,
 The two and thirty years were a
 mist that rolls away;
 For all along the valley, down by
 rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the
 voice of the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock
 and cave and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living
 voice to me.

THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour
 I cast to earth a seed.
 Up there came a flower,
 The people said, a weed.
 To and fro they went
 Thro' my garden-bower
 And muttering discontent
 Cursed me and my flower.
 Then it grew so tall
 It wore a crown of light,
 But thieves from o'er the wall
 Stole the seed by night.
 Sow'd it far and wide .
 By every town and tower,
 Till all the people cried
 'Splendid is the flower.'
 Read my little fable :
 He that runs may read.
 Most can raise the flowers now,
 For all have got the seed.
 And some are pretty enough,
 And some are poor indeed;
 And now again the people
 Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
 Where yon broad water sweetly
 slowly glides.
 It sees itself from thatch to base
 Dream in the sliding tides.
 And fairer she, but ah how soon to
 die !
 Her quiet dream of life this
 hour may cease.
 Her peaceful being slowly passes
 by
 To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with
 hope,
 Shot o'er the seething harbour-
 bar,
 And reach'd the ship and caught
 the rope,
 And whistled to the morning
 star.
 And while he whistled long and
 loud
 He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
 'O boy, tho' thou art young and
 proud,
 I see the place where thou wilt
 lie.
 'The sands and yeasty surges mix
 In caves about the dreary bay,
 And on thy ribs the limpet stieks,
 And in thy heart the scrawl
 shall play.'
 'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
 To those that stay and those
 that roam,
 But I will nevermore endure
 To sit with empty hands at
 home.
 'My mother clings about my neck,
 My sisters crying "stay for
 shame;"
 My father raves of death and
 wreck,
 They are all to blame, they are
 all to blame.

'God help me! save I take my
part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'

THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall
we go,
For a score of sweet little summers
or so?'
The sweet little wife of the singer
said,
On the day that follow'd the day
she was wed,
'Whither, O whither, love, shall
we go?'
And the singer shaking his curly
head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the
keys
There at his right with a sudden
crash,
Singing, 'and shall it be over the
seas
With a crew that is neither rude
nor rash,
But a bevy of Eroses apple-
cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-
beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby
glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth
that I know,
A mountain islet pointed and
peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with
vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-
streak'd
With many a rivulet high against
the Sun
The facets of the glorious moun-
tain flash
Above the valleys of palm and
pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no!
For in all that exquisite isle, my
dear,
There is but one bird with
musical throat,
And his compass is but of a single
note,
That it makes one weary to hear

'Mock me not! mock me not
love, let us go.'

'No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into
bloom on the tree,
And a storm never wakes on the
lonely sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely
wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens
the blood,
And makes it a sorrow to be.'

A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true—no true
Time himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you
evermore
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid
life
Shoots to the fall—take this an
pray that he
Who wrote it, honouring you
sweet faith in him,
May trust himself; and spite of
praise and scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable
world,
Attain the wise indifference of the
wise;
And after Autumn past—if left to
pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless
days—
Draw toward the long frost and
longest night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like
the fruit
Which in our winter woodland
looks a flower.¹

¹ The fruit of the spindle tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

EXPERIMENTS

BOÄDICÉA

WHILE about the shore of Mona
 those Neronian legionaries
 Burnt and broke the grove and
 altar of the Druid and
 Druidess,
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing
 loftily charioted,
 Mad and maddening all that heard
 her in her fierce volubility,
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain,
 near the colony Cámulodúne,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her
 daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and
 call us Britain's barbarous
 populaces,
 Did they hear me, would they
 listen, did they pity me supplicating?

Shall I heed them in their anguish?
 shall I brook to be supplicated?

Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear
 Coritanian, Trinobant!

Must their ever-ravaging eagle's
 beak and talon annihilate us?

Tear the noble heart of Britain,
 leave it gorily quivering?

Bark an answer, Britain's raven!
 bark and blacken innumerable,

Blacken round the Roman carrion,
 make the carcass a skeleton,

Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin,
 from the wilderness, wallow
 in it,

Till the face of Bel be brighten'd,
 Taranis be propitiated.

Lo their colony half-defended! lo
 their colony, Cámulodúne!

There the horde of Roman robbers
 mock at a barbarous adversary.

There the hive of Roman liars
 worship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.

Such is Rome, and this her deity:
 hear it, Spirit of Cássivélian!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have
 heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!

Doubt not ye the Gods have
 answer'd, Catieuchlanian,
 Trinobant.

These have told us all their anger
 in miraculous utterances,

Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a
 murmur heard aërially,

Phantom sound of blows descending,
 moan of an enemy
 massacred,

Phantom wail of women and
 children, multitudinous agonies.

Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling
 phantom bodies of horses and
 men;

Then a phantom colony smoulder'd
 on the reflux estuary;

Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly
 giddily tottering—

There was one who watch'd and
 told me—down their statue
 of Victory fell.

Lo their precious Roman bantling,
 lo the colony Cámulodúne,

Shall we teach it a Roman lesson?
 shall we care to be pitiful?

Shall we deal with it as an infant?
 shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian,
 hear Coritanian, Trinobant!

While I roved about the forest,
 long and bitterly meditating,

There I heard them in the darkness,
 at the mystical ceremony,

Loosely robed in flying raiment,
 sang the terrible prophetesses.

"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland,
 isle of silvery parapets,

Tho' the Roman eagle shadow
 thee, tho' the gathering enemy
 narrow thee.

Thou shalt wax and he shall
 dwindle, thou shalt be the
 mighty one yet!

Thine the liberty, thine the glory,
 thine the deeds to be celebrated,

Thine the myriad-rolling ocean,
light and shadow illimitable,

Thine the lands of lasting summer,
many-blossoming Paradises,

Thine the North and thine the
South and thine the battle-
thunder of God."

So they chanted: how shall
Britain light upon auguries
happier?

So they chanted in the darkness,
and there cometh a victory
now.

'Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian,
hear Coritanian, Trinobant!

Me the wife of rich Prasútagus,
me the lover of liberty,

Me they seized and me they tor-
tured, me they lash'd and
humiliated,

Me the sport of ribald Veterans,
mine of ruffian violators!

See they sit, they hide their faces,
miserable in ignominy!

Wherefore in me burns an anger,
not by blood to be satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo
the colony Cámulodúne!

There they ruled, and thence they
wasted all the flourishing
territory,

Thither at their will they haled
the yellow-ringleted Briton-
ess—

Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-
axe, unexhausted, inexor-
able.

Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian,
shout Coritanian, Trinobant,

Till the victim hear within and
yearn to hurry precipitously

Like the leaf in a roaring whirl-
wind, like the smoke in a
hurricane whirl'd.

Lo the colony, there they rioted
in the city of Cúnobeline!

There they drank in cups of
emerald, there at tables of
ebony lay,

Rolling on their purple couches in
their tender effeminacy.

There they dwelt and there they
rioted; there — there — there
dwell no more.

Burst the gates, and burn the
palaces, break the works
the statuary,

Take the hoary Roman head and
shatter it, hold it abomi-
nable,

Cut the Roman boy to pieces in
lust and voluptuousness,

Lash the maiden into swooning
me they lash'd and humiliat-

Chop the breasts from off the
mother, dash the brains of the
little one out,

Up my Britons, on my chariot, on
my chargers, trample the
under us.

So the Queen Boädicéa, stand-
ing loftily charioted,

Brandishing in her hand a dart and
rolling glances lionesslike,

Yell'd and shrieked between her
daughters in her fierce vol-
ubility.

Till her people all around the royal
chariot agitated,

Madly dash'd the darts together
writhing barbarous line-
aments,

Made the noise of frosty wood
lands, when they shiver
January,

Roar'd as when the rolling breake-
boom and blanch on the
precipices,

Yell'd as when the winds of winter
tear an oak on a promontory

So the silent colony hearing her
tumultuous adversaries

Clash the darts and on the buckler
beat with rapid unanimity
hand,

Thought on all her evil tyrannies
all her pitiless avarice,

Till she felt the heart within her
fall and flutter tremulously

Then her pulses at the clamour
of her enemy fainted away.

Out of evil evil flourishes, out
tyranny tyranny buds.

Can the land with Roman slaughter,
 multitudinous agonies.
 Perish'd many a maid and matron,
 many a valorous legionary.
 Tell the colony, city, and citadel,
 London, Verulam, C  mulo-
 d  ne.

ATTEMPTS AT CLASSIC METRES IN QUANTITY

TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

Hexameters and Pentameters

THESE lame hexameters the strong
 wing'd music of Homer!
 No—but a most burlesque bar-
 barous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever
 heard, ye Muses, in Eng-
 land?
 When did a frog coarser croak
 upon our Helicon?
 Hexameters no worse than daring
 Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, bar-
 barous hexameters!

MILTON

Alcaics

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of
 harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or
 Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of Eng-
 land,
 Milton, a name to resound
 for ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel,
 Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous
 armouries,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empy-
 rean
 Rings to the roar of an
 angel onset—
 Be rather all that bowery loneli-
 ness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily mur-
 muring,

And bloom profuse and cedar
 arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out
 in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of
 India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial
 ocean isle,
 And crinson-hued the stately
 palmwoods
 Whisper in odorous heights
 of even.

Hendecasyllabics

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny
 poem
 All composed in a metre of
 Catullus,
 All in quantity, careful of my
 motion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly
 bears him.
 Lest I fall unawares before the
 people,
 Waking laughter in indolent re-
 viewers.
 Should I flounder awhile without
 a tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not
 without a welcome,
 All that chorus of indolent re-
 viewers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not
 to tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty
 metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly,
 nor believe me
 Too presumptuous, indolent re-
 viewers.
 O blatant magazines, regard me
 rather—
 Since I blush to belaud myself a
 moment—
 As some rare little rose, a piece
 of inmost
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-
 like
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbe-
 nignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE.¹

So Hector said, and sea-like roar'd
his host;
Then loosed their sweating horses
from the yoke,
And each beside his chariot bound
his own;
And oxen from the city, and
goodly sheep
In haste they drove, and honey-
hearted wine
And bread from out the houses
brought, and heap'd
Their firewood, and the winds from
off the plain
Roll'd the rich vapour far into the
heaven.
And these all night upon the
bridge² of war
Sat glorying; many a fire before
them blazed:
As when in heaven the stars about
the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds
are laid,
And every height comes out, and
jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable
heavens
Break open to their highest, and
all the stars
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens
in his heart:
So many a fire between the ships
and stream
Of Xanthus blazed before the
towers of Troy,

¹ Note in *Cornhill Magazine*: 'Some, and among these one at least of our best and greatest, have endeavoured to give us the *Iliad* in English hexameters, and by what appears to me to be their failure, have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our blank verse in this matter, and now after having spoken so disrespectfully here of these hexameters, I venture, or rather feel bound, to subjoin a specimen, however brief and with whatever demerits, of a blank verse translation.'

² Or, ridge.

A thousand on the plain; and
close by each
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning
fire;
And champing golden grain, the
horses stood
Hard by their chariots, waiting
the dawn.³

Iliad, viii, 542-6

THE CAPTAIN

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

HE that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as Hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song.
Brave the Captain was: the se-
men
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen
Sailors bold and true.
But they hated his oppression,
Stern he was and rash;
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and
cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came.
So they past by capes and
islands,
Many a harbour mouth,
Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.
On a day when they were going
O'er the lone expanse,
In the North, her canvas flowing
Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's colour high
en'd,
Joyful came his speech:

³ Or more literally—

And eating hoary grain and pul-
the steeds
Stood by their cars, waiting t
throned morn.

But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
 In the eyes of each.
 'Chase,' he said: the ship flew
 forward,
 And the wind did blow;
 Stately, lightly, went she Nor-
 ward
 Till she near'd the foe.
 Then they look'd at him they
 hated,
 Had what they desired:
 Mute with folded arms they
 waited—
 Not a gun was fired.
 But they heard the foeman's
 thunder
 Roaring out their doom;
 All the air was torn in sunder,
 Crashing went the boom,
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were
 shatter'd,
 Bullets fell like rain;
 Over mast and deck were scat-
 ter'd
 Blood and brains of men.
 Spars were splinter'd; decks were
 broken:
 Every mother's son—
 Down they dropt—no word was
 spoken—
 Each beside his gun.
 On the decks as they were
 lying,
 Were their faces grim.
 In their blood, as they lay
 dying,
 Did they smile on him.
 Those, in whom he had reliance
 For his noble name,
 With one smile of still defiance
 Sold him unto shame.
 Shame and wrath his heart con-
 founded,
 Pale he turn'd and red,
 Till himself was deadly wounded
 Falling on the dead.
 Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
 Years have wander'd by,
 Side by side beneath the water
 Crew and Captain lie;
 There the sunlit ocean tosses
 O'er them mouldering,
 And the lonely seabird crosses
 With one waft of the wing.

THREE SONNETS TO A COQUETTE

I

CARESS'D or chidden by the dainty
 hand,
 And singing airy trifles this or
 that,
 Light Hope at Beauty's call would
 perch and stand,
 And run thro' every change of
 sharp and flat;
 And Fancy came and at her
 pillow sat,
 When Sleep had bound her in his
 rosy band,
 And chased away the still-
 recurring gnat,
 And woke her with a lay from
 fairy land.
 But now they live with Beauty
 less and less,
 For Hope is other Hope and
 wanders far,
 Nor cares to lisp in love's
 delicious creeds;
 And Fancy watches in the wilder-
 ness,
 Poor Fancy sadder than a single
 star,
 That sets at twilight in a
 land of reeds.

II

THE form, the form alone is
 eloquent!
 A nobler yearning never broke
 her rest
 Than but to dance and sing,
 be gaily drest,
 And win all eyes with all accom-
 plishment:
 Yet in the waltzing-circle as we
 went,
 My fancy made me for a moment
 blest
 To find my heart so near the
 beauteous breast
 That once had power to rob it of
 content.

A moment came the tenderness of
tears,
The phantom of a wish that
once could move,
A ghost of passion that no
smiles restore—
For ah ! the slight coquette, she
cannot love,
And if you kissed her feet a thou-
sand years,
She still would take the
praise, and care no more.

III

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to
take the cast
Of those dead lineaments that
near thee lie ?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter,
for the past,
In painting some dead friend
from memory ?
Weep on : beyond his object Love
can last :
His object lives : more cause to
weep have I :
My tears, no tears of love, are
flowing fast,
No tears of love, but tears that
Love can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful
cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where
she sits—
Ah pity—hint it not in
human tones,
But breathe it into earth and
close it up
With secret death for ever, in
the pits
Which some green Christmas
crams with weary bones.

ON A MOURNER

I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,
Counts nothing that she meets
with base,
But lives and loves in every
place ;

II

Fills out the homely quickse-
screens,
And makes the purple lila
ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, an
greens
The swamp, where hums the
dropping snipe,
With moss and braided marish
pipe ;

III

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the
time
Is pleasant, and the woods are
ways
Are pleasant, and the bees
and lime
Put forth and feel a gladd-
' clime.'

IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine
Teach that sick heart the strong
choice,
Till all thy life one way inclin-
With one wide will that clos-
thine.

V

And when the zoning eve has
died
Where yon dark valleys win-
forlorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse
and bride,
From out the borders of the
morn,
With that fair child betwixt
them born.

VI

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tom-
ing sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling
stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet
have trod,
And Virtue, like a household
god

VII

Promising empire; such as those
That once at dead of night did
greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that
he rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

THE VICTIM

I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low,
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden
foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
'The Gods are moved against
the land.'
The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand.
'Help us from famine
And plague and strife!
What would you have of
us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,
(Answer, O answer)
We give you his life.'

II

But still the foeman spoil'd and
burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in
wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling
flood;
And dead men lay all over the
way,
Or down in a furrow scathed
with flame:
And ever and aye the Priesthood
moan'd
Till at last it seem'd that an
answer came:
'The King is happy
In child and wife;
Take you his nearest,
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life.'

III

The Priest went out by heath and
hill;
The King was hunting in the
wild;
They found the mother sitting
still;
She cast her arms about the
child.
The child was only eight summers
old,
His beauty still with his years
increased,
His face was ruddy, his hair was
gold,
He seem'd a victim due to the
priest.
The Priest exulted,
And cried with joy,
'Here is his nearest,
Here is his dearest,
We take the boy.'

IV

The King return'd from out the
wild,
He bore but little game in hand;
The mother said, 'They have taken
the child,
To spill his blood and heal the
land:
The land is sick, the people dis-
eased,
And blight and famine on all
the lea:
The holy Gods, they must be
appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to
me.
They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your nearest?
Is *he* your dearest?
(Answer, O answer)
Or I, the wife?'

V

The King bent low, with hand on
brow,
He stay'd his arms upon his
knee:
'O wife, what use to answer now?
For now the Priest has judged
for me.'

The King was shaken with holy fear;
 'The Gods,' he said, 'would
 have chosen well;

Yet both are near, and both are
 dear,

And which the dearest I cannot
 tell !'

But the Priest was happy,
 His victim won,
 'We have his nearest,
 We have his dearest,
 His only son !'

VI

The rites prepared, the victim
 bared,

The knife uprising toward the
 blow,

To the altar-stone she sprang
 alone,

'Me, me, not him, my darling,
 no !'

He caught her away with a sudden
 cry;

Suddenly from him brake the
 wife,

And shrieking '*I am his dearest,*
I—

I am his dearest !' rush'd on the
 knife.

And the Priest was happy,
 'O, Father Odin,

We give you a life.

Which was his nearest ?

Which was his dearest ?

The Gods have answered :

We give them the wife !'

THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the
 year,

And with it a spiteful letter.

My name in song has done him
 much wrong,

For himself has done much
 better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
 If men neglect your pages ?

I think not much of yours or of
 mine,

I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range
 of the times !

Are mine for the moment
 stronger ?

Yet hate me not, but abide your
 lot,

I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are a
 brief ;

What room is left for a hater ?

Yet the yellow leaf hates the
 greener leaf,

For it hangs one moment later

Greater than I—is that your
 cry ?

And men will live to see it.

Well—if it be so—so it is, you
 know ;

And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf

But this is the time of hollies.

O hollies and ivies and ever-
 greens :

How I hate the spites and the
 follies !

WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator
 glory of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to
 be lost on an endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to
 struggle, to right the wrong—

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory
 no lover of glory she :

Give her the glory of going on
 and still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the
 wages of Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure
 for the life of the worm and
 the fly ?

She desires no isles of the blest, no
 quiet seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to
 bask in a summer sky :

Give her the wages of going on
 and not to die.

LUCRETIIUS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius,
 found
 Her master cold; for when the
 morning flush
 Of passion and the first embrace
 had died
 Between them, tho' he loved her
 none the less,
 Yet often when the woman heard
 his foot
 Return from pacings in the field,
 and ran
 To greet him with a kiss, the
 master took
 Small notice, or austere, for—
 his mind
 Half buried in some weightier
 argument,
 Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the
 rise
 And long roll of the Hexameter—
 he past
 To turn and ponder those three
 hundred scrolls
 Left by the Teacher, whom he held
 divine.
 She brook'd it not; but wrathful,
 petulant,
 Dreaming some rival, sought and
 found a witch
 Who brew'd the philtre which had
 power, they said,
 To lead an errant passion home
 again.
 And this, at times, she mingled
 with his drink,
 And this destroy'd him; for the
 wicked broth
 Confused the chemic labour of the
 blood,
 And tickling the brute brain
 within the man's
 Made havoc among those tender
 cells, and check'd
 His power to shape: he loath'd
 himself; and once
 After a tempest woke upon a
 morn
 That mock'd him with returning
 calm, and cried,

'Storm in the night! for thrice
 I heard the rain
 Rushing; and once the flash of a
 thunderbolt—
 Methought I never saw so fierce a
 fork—
 Struck out the streaming moun-
 tain-side, and show'd
 A riotous confluence of water-
 courses
 Blanching and billowing in a
 hollow of it,
 Where all but yester-eve was
 dusty-dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye
 holy Gods, what dreams!
 For thrice I waken'd after dreams.
 Perchance
 We do but recollect the dreams
 that come
 Just ere the waking: terrible!
 for it seem'd
 A void was made in Nature; all
 her bonds
 Crack'd; and I saw the flaring
 atom-streams
 And torrents of her myriad
 universe,
 Ruining along the illimitable inane,
 Fly on to clash together again,
 and make
 Another and another frame of
 things
 For ever: that was mine, my
 dream, I knew it—
 Of and belonging to me, as the
 dog
 With inward yelp and restless
 forefoot plies
 His function of the woodland:
 but the next!
 I thought that all the blood by
 Sylla shed
 Came driving rainlike down again
 on earth,
 And where it dash'd the reddening
 meadow, sprang
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean
 teeth,
 For these I thought my dream
 would show to me,
 But girls, Hetairai, curious in
 their art,

Hired animalisms, vile as those
that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's
orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet
Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd
and round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd
again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up,
and saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest
day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom
stood out the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hover-
ingly a sword
Now over and now under, now
direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank
down shamed
At all that beauty; and as I stared,
a fire,
The fire that left a roofless Ilion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd
me that I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy
Venus, thine,
Because I would not one of thine
own doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to
thee? thine,
Forgetful how my rich procemion
makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian
field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers.
My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely.
Which of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee
at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far
aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and
spite and scorn,
Live the great life which all our
greatest fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal
calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess
like ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would
I cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender
arms
Round him, and keep him from
the lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter
house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee;
meant not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shoo
to see
Slide from that quiet heaven c
hers, and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herd
were abroad;
Nor her that o'er her wounde
hunter wept
Her Deity false in human-amorou
tears;
Nor whom her beardless apple
arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O y
Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilia
called
Calliope to grace his golde
verse—
Ay, and this Kypris also—did
take
That popular name of thine t
shadow forth
The all-generating powers an
genial heat
Of Nature, when she strike
through the thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large an
lambs are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, an
the bird
Makes his heart voice amid th
blaze of flowers:
Which things appear the work
mighty Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go m
work is left
Unfinish'd—if I go. The God
who haunt
The lucid interspace of world an
world,

Where never creeps a cloud, or
 moves a wind,
 Nor ever falls the least white star
 of snow,
 Nor ever lowest roll of thunder
 moans,
 Nor sound of human sorrow
 mounts to mar
 Their sacred everlasting calm!
 and such,
 Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
 Not such, nor all unlike it, man
 may gain
 Letting his own life go. The Gods,
 the Gods!
 If all be atoms, how then should
 the Gods
 Being atomic not be dissoluble,
 Not follow the great law? My
 master held
 That Gods there are, for all men
 so believe.
 I prest my footsteps into his, and
 meant
 Surely to lead my Memmius in a
 train
 Of flowery clauses onward to the
 proof
 That Gods there are, and death-
 less. Meant? I meant?
 I have forgotten what I meant:
 my mind
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are
 lamed.

'Look where another of our
 Gods, the Sun,
 Apollo, Delius, or of older use
 All-seeing Hyperion—what you
 will—
 Has mounted yonder; since he
 never sware,
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on
 wretched man,
 That he would only shine among
 the dead
 Hereafter; tales! for never yet
 on earth
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of
 roasting ox
 Moan round the spit—nor knows
 he what he sees;
 King of the East altho' he seem,
 and girl

With song and flame and fra-
 grance, slowly lifts
 His golden feet on those empurpled
 stairs
 That climb into the windy halls of
 heaven:
 And here he glances on an eye
 new-born,
 And gets for greeting but a wail of
 pain;
 And here he stays upon a freezing
 orb
 That fain would gaze upon him to
 the last;
 And here upon a yellow eyelid
 fall'n
 And closed by those who mourn a
 friend in vain,
 Not thankful that his troubles are
 no more.
 And me, altho' his fire is on my
 face
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all
 can tell
 Whether I mean this day to end
 myself,
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he
 says,
 That men like soldiers may not
 quit the post
 Allotted by the Gods: but he that
 holds
 The Gods are careless, wherefore
 need he care
 Greatly for them, nor rather
 plunge at once,
 Being troubled, wholly out of
 sight, and sink
 Past earthquake—ay, and gout
 and stone, that break
 Body toward death, and palsy,
 death-in-life,
 And wretched age—and worst
 disease of all,
 These prodigies of myriad naked-
 nesses,
 And twisted shapes of lust, un-
 speakable,
 Abominable, strangers at my
 hearth
 Not welcome, harpies miring every
 dish,
 The phantom husks of something
 foully done,

And fleeting thro' the boundless
universe,
And blasting the long quiet of my
breast
With animal heat and dire in-
sanity?

'How should the mind, except
it loved them, clasp
These idols to herself? or do they
fly
Now thinner, and now thicker,
like the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in,
perforce
Of multitude, as crowds that in an
hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and
bear
The keepers down, and throng,
their rags and they,
The basest, far into that council-
hall
Where sit the best and stateliest
of the land?

'Can I not fling this horror off
me again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature
can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath
of storm,
At random ravage? and how
easily
The mountain there has cast his
cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest
air,
A mountain o'er a mountain, ay,
and within
All hollow as the hopes and fears
of men.

'But who was he, that in the
garden snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods?
a tale
To laugh at—more to laugh at in
myself—
For look! what is it? there?
yon arbutus
Totters; a noiseless riot under-
neath

Strikes through the wood, sets all
the tops quivering—
The mountain quickens into
Nymph and Faun;
And here an Oread—how the sun
delights
To glance and shift about her
slippery sides,
And rosy knees and supple
roundedness,
And budded bosom-peaks—who
this way runs,
Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr,
see—
Follows; but him I proved im-
possible;
Twy-natured is no nature: yet he
draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him
now
Beastlier than any phantom of his
kind
That ever butted his rough
brother-brute
For lust or lusty blood or pro-
vender:
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him;
and she
Loathes him as well; such a
precipitate heel,
Fledged as it were with Mercury's
ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me: but will she
fling herself,
Shameless upon me? Catch her,
goatfoot: nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled
wilderness,
And cavern-shadowing laurels,
hide! do I wish—
What?—that the bush were leaf-
less? or to whelm
All of them in one massacre? O
ye Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold,
to you
From childly wont and ancient
use I call—
I thought I lived securely as your
selves—
No lewdness, narrowing envy,
monkey-spite,
No madness of ambition, avarice,
none:

To larger feast than under plane
 or pine
 With neighbours laid along the
 grass, to take
 Only such cups as left us friendly
 warm,
 Affirming each his own philoso-
 phy—
 Nothing to mar the sober majes-
 ties
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean
 life
 But now it seems some unseen
 monster lays
 His vast and filthy hands upon my
 will,
 Wrenching it backward into his;
 and spoils
 My bliss in being; and it was not
 great;
 For save when shutting reasons
 up in rhythm,
 Or Heliconian honey in living
 words,
 To make a truth less harsh, I
 often grew
 Tired of so much within our little
 life,
 Or of so little in our little
 life—
 Poor little life that toddles half an
 hour
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and
 there an end—
 And since the nobler pleasure
 seems to fade,
 Why should I, beastlike as I find
 myself,
 Not manlike end myself?—our
 privilege—
 What beast has heart to do it?
 And what man,
 What Roman would be dragg'd in
 triumph thus?
 Not I; not he, who bears one name
 with her,
 Whose death-blow struck the
 dateless doom of kings,
 When, brooking not the Tarquin
 in her veins,
 He made her blood in sight of
 Collatine
 And all his peers, flushing the
 guiltless air,

Spout from the maiden fountain in
 her heart.
 And from it sprang the Common-
 wealth, which breaks
 As I am breaking now!

'And therefore now
 Let her, that is the womb and
 tomb of all,
 Great Nature, take, and forcing
 far apart
 Those blind beginnings that have
 made me man,
 Dash them anew together at her
 will
 Through all her cycles—into man
 once more,
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent
 flower:
 But till this cosmic order every-
 where
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in
 one day
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that
 hour perhaps
 Is not so far when momentary man
 Shall seem no more a something
 to himself,
 But he, his hopes and hates, his
 homes and fanes,
 And even his bones long laid
 within the grave,
 The very sides of the grave itself
 shall pass,
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom
 and void,
 Into the unseen for ever,—till that
 hour,
 My golden work in which I told a
 truth
 That stays the rolling Ixionian
 wheel,
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-
 snake, and plucks
 The mortal soul from out immortal
 hell,
 Shall stand: ay, surely: then it
 fails at last
 And perishes as I must; for O
 Thou,
 Passionless bride, divine Tran-
 quillity,
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the
 wise,

Who fail to find thee, being as thou
art
Without one pleasure and without
one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must
be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season,
thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest
not
How roughly men may woo thee
so they win—
Thus—thus : the soul flies out and
dies in the air.'

With that he drove the knife
into his side :
She heard him raging, heard him
fall ; ran in,
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out
upon herself
As having fail'd in duty to him,
shriek'd
That she but meant to win him
back, fell on him,
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he
answer'd, 'Care not thou !
Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare
thee well !'

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs,
as they canters awaäy ?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—
that's what I 'ears 'em
saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—
Sam, thou's an ass for thy
paaäins :
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is
legs nor in all thy braaäins.

II

Woä—theer's a crow to pluck wi'
tha, Sam : yon's parson's
'ouse—
Dosen't thou know that a man
mun be eäther a man or a
mouse ?

Time to think on it then ; for
thou'll be twenty to weeäk.¹
Proputty, proputty—woä ther
woä—let ma 'ear mysén
speäk.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as
beän a-talkin' o' thee ;
Thou's been talkin' to muther, an
she beän a tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny—
thou's sweet upo' parson's
lass—
Noä—thou'll marry fur luvv—an
we boäth on us thinks tha an
ass.

IV

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—
Saäint's - daäy—they was
ringing the bells.
She's a beauty thou thinks—an
soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's
a beauty ?—the flower as
blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an
proputty, proputty graws.

V

Do'ant be stunt² : taäke time : I
knaws what maäkes tha se
mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses
mysén when I wur a lad ?
But I know'd a Quaäker feller as
often 'as tow'd ma this :
"Doänt thou marry for munny
but goä wheer munny is !"

VI

An' I went wheer munny war : an
thy mother coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laaäid by, an'
nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty :—
niver giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle
an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

¹ This week. ² Obstinate.

VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she
weänt 'a nowt when 'e's
deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut,
and addle¹ her breäð :
Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an'
weänt nivr git naw 'igher ;
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on
afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.

VIII

And thin 'e coom'd to the parish
wi' lots o' 'Varsity debt,
Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e'
'ant got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the
grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a
shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd² yowe :
fur, Sammy, 'e married fur
luvv.

IX

Luvv ? what's luvv ? thou can
luvv thy lass an' 'er munny
too,
Maakin' 'em goä toghiter as they've
good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by
cause o' 'er munny laaïd
by ?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight
moor fur it : reäson why.

X

Ay an' thy muther says thou
wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn : an'
we boäth on us thinks tha an
ass.
Woä then, proputty, wiltha ?—an
ass as near as mays nowt—³
Woä then, wiltha ? dangtha !—the
bees is as fell as owt.⁴

¹ Earn.

² Or fow-welter'd—said of a sheep
ying on its back in the furrow.

³ Makes nothing.

⁴ The flies are as fierce as anything.

XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his
'eäð, lad, out o' the fence !
Gentleman burn ! what's gentle-
man burn ? is it shillins an'
pence ?
Proputty, proputty's ivrything
'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder,
fur them as 'as it's the best.

XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks
into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs
an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws
wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy,
the poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees,
mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the
gittin' whiniver munny was
got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt ; leäst-
waays 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd,
an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV

Look thou theer wheer Wigglesby
beck comes out by the 'ill !
Feyther run up to the farm, an'
I runs up to the mill ;
An' I'll run up to the brig, an'
that thou'll live to see ;
And if thou marries a good un I'll
leäve the land to thee.

XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy,
wheerby I means to stick ;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll
leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—
that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—
canter an' canter awaäy.

APPENDIX

POEMS AND SONNETS, 1829-1864, NOT REPRINTED BY AUTHOR

TIMBUCTOO

[First published in 1829.]

Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
A mystic city, goal of high emprise.
—CHAPMAN.

I STOOD upon the Mountain which
o'erlooks
The narrow seas, whose rapid
interval
Parts Afric from green Europe,
when the Sun
Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and
above
The silent heavens were blench'd
with faëry light,
Uncertain whether faëry light or
cloud,
Flowing Southward, and the
chasms of deep, deep blue
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the
stars
Were flooded over with clear glory
and pale.
I gazed upon the sheeny coast
beyond,
There where the Giant of old Time
infix'd
The limits of his prowess, pillars
high
Long time erased from Earth :
even as the Sea
When weary of wild inroad
buildeth up
Huge mounds whereby to stay his
yeasty waves.
And much I mused on legends
quaint and old
Which whilom won the hearts of
all on Earth
Toward their brightness, ev'n as
flame draws air;
But had their being in the heart
of man

As air is th' life of flame : and thou
wert then
A center'd glory-circled memory,
Divinest Atalantis, whom the
waves
Have buried deep, and thou of
later name,
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with
gold :
Shadows to which, despite all
shocks of Change,
All on-set of capricious Accident,
Men clung with yearning Hope
which would not die.
As when in some great City where
the walls
Shake, and the streets with ghastly
faces throng'd,
Do utter forth a subterranean
voice,
Among the inner columns far
retired
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,
Before the awful Genius of the
place
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep
faith, the while
Above her head the weak lamp
dips and winks
Unto the fearful summoning with-
out :
Nathless she ever clasps the
marble knees,
Bathes the cold hand with tears,
and gazeth on
Those eyes which wear no light
but that wherewith
Her phantasy informs them.

Where are ye,
Thrones of the Western wave, fair
Islands green ?
Where are your moonlight halls,
your cedarn glooms,

The blossoming abysses of your
 hills ?
 Your flowering Capes, and your
 gold-sanded bays
 Blown round with happy airs of
 odorous winds ?
 Where are the infinite ways,
 which, Seraph-trod,
 Wound thro' your great Elysian
 solitudes,
 Whose lowest depths were, as with
 visible love,
 Fill'd with Divine effulgence,
 circumfused,
 Flowing between the clear and
 polish'd stems,
 And ever circling round their
 emerald cones
 In coronals and glories, such as
 gird
 The unfading foreheads of the
 Saints in Heaven ?
 For nothing visible, they say, had
 birth
 In that blest ground, but it was
 play'd about
 With its peculiar glory. Then I
 raised
 My voice and cried, 'Wide Afric,
 doth thy Sun
 Lighten, thy hills enfold a City as
 fair
 As those which starr'd the night
 o' the elder World ?
 Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo
 A dream as frail as those of
 ancient Time ?'

A curve of whitening, flashing,
 ebbing light !
 A rustling of white wings ! the
 bright descent
 Of a young Seraph ! and he stood
 beside me
 There on the ridge, and look'd into
 my face
 With his unutterable, shining
 orbs.
 So that with hasty motion I did
 veil
 My vision with both hands, and
 saw before me
 Such colour'd spots as dance
 athwart the eyes

Of those, that gaze upon the
 noonday Sun.
 Girt with a zone of flashing gold
 beneath
 His breast, and compass'd round
 about his brow
 With triple arch of everchanging
 bows,
 And circled with the glory of living
 light
 And alternation of all hues, he
 stood.

'O child of man, why muse you
 here alone
 Upon the Mountain, on the dreams
 of old
 Which fill'd the earth with passing
 loveliness,
 Which flung strange music on the
 howling winds,
 And odours rapt from remote
 Paradise ?
 Thy sense is clogg'd with dull
 mortality ;
 Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond
 of clay :
 Open thine eyes and see.'

I look'd, but not
 Upon his face, for it was wonder-
 ful
 With its exceeding brightness, and
 the light
 Of the great Angel Mind which
 look'd from out
 The starry glowing of his restless
 eyes.
 I felt my soul grow mighty, and
 my spirit
 With supernatural excitation
 bound
 Within me, and my mental eye
 grew large
 With such a vast circumference of
 thought,
 That in my vanity I seem'd to
 stand
 Upon the outward verge and
 bound alone
 Of full beatitude. Each failing
 sense,
 As with a momentary flash of
 light

Grew thrillingly distinct and keen.
 I saw
 The smallest grain that dappled
 the dark Earth,
 The indistinctest atom in deep
 air,
 The Moon's white cities, and the
 opal width
 Of her small glowing lakes, her
 silver heights
 Unvisited with dew of vagrant
 cloud,
 And the unsounded, undescended
 depth
 Of her black hollows. The clear
 Galaxy
 Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonder-
 ful,
 Distinct and vivid with sharp
 points of light,
 Blaze within blaze, an unimagined
 depth
 And harmony of planet-girded
 suns
 And moon-encircled planets, wheel
 in wheel,
 Arch'd the wan sapphire. Nay—
 the hum of men,
 Or other things talking in un-
 known tongues,
 And notes of busy life in distant
 worlds
 Beat like a far wave on my anxious
 ear.

A maze of piercing, trackless,
 thrilling thoughts,
 Involving and embracing each
 with each,
 Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,
 Expanding momentarily with every
 sight
 And sound which struck the
 palpitating sense,
 The issue of strong impulse,
 hurried through
 The riv'n rapt brain; as when in
 some large lake
 From pressure of descendant crags,
 which lapse
 Disjointed, crumbling from their
 parent slope
 At slender interval, the level
 calm

Is ridg'd with restless and in-
 creasing spheres
 Which break upon each other,
 each th' effect
 Of separate impulse, but more
 fleet and strong
 Than its precursor, till the eye in
 vain
 Amid the wild unrest of swimming
 shade
 Dappled with hollow and alter-
 nate rise
 Of interpenetrated arc, would
 scan
 Definite round.

I know not if I shape
 These things with accurate simili-
 tude
 From visible objects, for but dimly
 now,
 Less vivid than a half-forgotten
 dream,
 The memory of that mental
 excellence
 Comes o'er me, and it may be I
 entwine
 The indecision of my present
 mind
 With its past clearness, yet it
 seems to me
 As even then the torrent of quick
 thought
 Absorbed me from the nature of
 itself
 With its own fleetness. Where is
 he, that borne
 Adown the sloping of an arrowy
 stream,
 Could link his shallop to the
 fleeting edge,
 And muse midway with philoso-
 phic calm
 Upon the wondrous laws, which
 regulate
 The fierceness of the bounding
 Element?

My thoughts which long had
 grovell'd in the slime
 Of this dull world, like dusky
 worms which house
 Beneath unshaken waters, but at
 once

Upon some Earth-awakening day
 of Spring
 Do pass from gloom to glory, and
 aloft
 Winnow the purple, bearing on
 both sides
 Double display of star-lit wings,
 which burn,
 Fan-like and fibred with intensest
 bloom;
 Ev'n so my thoughts, erewhile so
 low, now felt
 Unutterable buoyancy and
 strength
 To bear them upward through the
 trackless fields
 Of undefin'd existence far and
 free.

Then first within the South me-
 thought I saw
 A wilderness of spires, and chry-
 stal pile
 Of rampart upon rampart, dome
 on dome,
 Unlimitable range of battlement
 On battlement, and the Imperial
 height
 Of Canopy o'er-canopied.

Behind
 In diamond light upsprung the
 dazzling peaks
 Of Pyramids as far surpassing
 earth's
 As heaven than earth is fairer.
 Each aloft
 Upon his narrow'd eminence bore
 globes
 Of wheeling Suns, or Stars, or
 semblances
 Of either, showering circular abyss
 Of radiance. But the glory of the
 place
 Stood out a pillar'd front of
 burnish'd gold,
 interminably high, if gold it were
 Or metal more ethereal, and
 beneath
 Two doors of blinding brilliance,
 where no gaze
 might rest, stood open, and the
 eye could scan,
 Through length of porch and
 valve and boundless hall,

Part of a throne of fiery flame,
 wherefrom
 The snowy skirting of a garment
 hung,
 And glimpse of multitudes of
 multitudes
 That minister'd around it—if I saw
 These things distinctly, for my
 human brain
 Stagger'd beneath the vision, and
 thick night
 Came down upon my eyelids, and
 I fell.

With ministering hand he rais'd
 me up :
 Then with a mournful and ineff-
 able smile,
 Which but to look on for a mo-
 ment fill'd
 My eyes with irresistible sweet
 tears,
 In accents of majestic melody,
 Like a swoln river's gushings in
 still night
 Mingled with floating music, thus
 he spake :

'There is no mightier Spirit
 than I to sway
 The heart of man : and teach him
 to attain
 By shadowing forth the Unattain-
 able ;
 And step by step to scale that
 mighty stair
 Whose landing-place is wrapt
 about with clouds
 Of glory, of Heaven.¹ With
 earliest light of Spring,
 And in the glow of fallow Sum-
 mertide,
 And in red Autumn when the
 winds are wild
 With gambols, and when full-
 voiced Winter roofs
 The headland with inviolate white
 snow,
 I play about his heart a thousand
 ways,
 Visit his eyes with visions, and his
 ears

¹ 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father in
 Heaven is perfect.'

With harmonies of wind and wave
and wood,
—Of winds which tell of waters,
and of waters
Betraying the close kisses of the
wind—
And win him unto me : and few
there be
So gross of heart who have not
felt and known
A higher than they see : They with
dim eyes
Behold me darkling. Lo ! I have
given thee
To understand my presence, and
to feel
My fullness ; I have fill'd thy lips
with power.
I have rais'd thee nigher to the
spheres of Heaven
Man's first, last home : and thou
with ravish'd sense
Listenest the lordly music flowing
from
Th' illimitable years. I am the
Spirit,
The permeating life which cour-
seth through
All th' intricate and labyrinthine
veins
Of the great vine of Fable, which,
outspread
With growth of shadowing leaf
and clusters rare,
Reacheth to every corner under
Heaven,
Deep-rooted in the living soil of
Truth ;
So that men's hopes and fears take
refuge in
The fragrance of its complicated
glooms,
And cool impleach'd twilights.
Child of Man,
See'st thou yon river, whose
translucent wave,
Forth issuing from the darkness,
windeth through
The argent streets o' th' City,
imaging
The soft inversion of her tremulous
Domes,
Her gardens frequent with the
stately Palm,

Her Pagods hung with music of
sweet bells,
Her obelisks of rangèd Chrysolite,
Minarets and towers ? Lo ! how
he passeth by,
And gulphs himself in sands, as
not enduring
To carry through the world those
waves, which bore
The reflex of my City in their
depths.
Oh City ! oh latest Throne !
where I was rais'd
To be a mystery of loveliness
Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh
come
When I must render up this
glorious home
To keen Discovery : soon yon
brilliant towers
Shall darken with the waving of
her wand ;
Darken, and shrink and shiver
into huts,
Black specks amid a waste of
dreary sand,
Low-built, mud-wall'd, Barbarian
settlements.
How chang'd from this fair City !

Thus far the Spirit :
Then parted Heaven-ward on the
wing : and I
Was left alone on Calpe, and the
Moon
Had fallen from the night, and all
was dark !

FROM 'POEMS CHIEFLY LYRICAL'

[1830.]

THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY'

?

I AM any man's suitor,
If any will be my tutor :
Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast :
In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,
In eternity no past.

We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why* ?

The bulrush nods unto its brother,
The wheatears whisper to each other :

What is it they say ? What do they there ?

Why two and two make four ?
Why round is not square ?

Why the rock stands still, and the light clouds fly ?

Why the heavy oak groans, and the white willows sigh ?

Why deep is not high, and high is not deep ?

Whether we wake, or whether we sleep ?

Whether we sleep, or whether we die ?

How you are you ? Why I am I ?
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why* ?

The world is somewhat ; it goes on somehow ;

But what is the meaning of *then* and *now* ?

I feel there is something ; but how and what ?

I know there is somewhat ; but what and why ?

I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth—'why ? why ?'

In the summerwoods when the sun falls low

And the great bird sits on the opposite bough,

And stares in his face and shouts, 'how ? how ?'

And the black owl scuds down the mellow twilight,

And chaunts, 'how ? how ?' the whole of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is spilt ?

What the life is ? where the soul may lie ?

Why a church is with a steeple built ;

And a house with a chimneypot ?

Who will riddle me the *how* and the *what* ?

Who will riddle me the *what* and the *why* ?

THE BURIAL OF LOVE

His eyes in eclipse,

Pale-cold his lips,

The light of his hopes unfed,

Mute his tongue,

His bow unstrung

With the tears he hath shed,
Backward drooping his graceful head,

Love is dead :

His last arrow is sped ;

He hath not another dart ;

Go—carry him to his dark death-bed ;

Bury him in the cold cold heart—

Love is dead.

Oh, truest love ! art thou forlorn,
And unrevenged ? thy pleasant wiles

Forgotten, and thine innocent joy ?

Shall hollow-hearted apathy,
The cruellest form of perfect scorn,
With languor of most hateful smiles,

For ever write,

In the withered light

Of the tearless eye,

An epitaph that all may spy ?

No ! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,
Nor the round sun shine that shineth to all ;

Her light shall into darkness change ;

For her the green grass shall not spring,

Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet birds sing,

Till Love have his full revenge.

TO—

SAINTED Juliet ! dearest name !

If to love be life alone,

Divinest Juliet,

I love thee, and live; and yet

Love unreturned is like the fragrant flame

Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice

Offered to gods upon an altar-throne;

My heart is lighted at thine eyes,
Changed into fire, and blown
about with sighs.

SONG

I

I' THE glooming light

Of middle night

So cold and white,

Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning wave;

Beside her are laid

Her mattock and spade,

For she hath half delved her own deep grave.

Alone she is there :

The white clouds drizzle : her hair falls loose;

Her shoulders are bare;

Her tears are mixed with the beaded dews.

II

Death standeth by;

She will not die;

With glazed eye

She looks at her grave : she cannot sleep;

Ever alone

She maketh her moan :

She cannot speak; she can only weep,

For she will not hope.

The thick snow falls on her flake by flake,

The dull wave mourns down the slope,

The world will not change, and her heart will not break.

SONG

I

THE lintwhite and the throstle-cock

Have voices sweet and clear;

All in the bloomèd May.

They from the blosmy brere

Call to the fleeting year,

If that he would them hear

And stay.

Alas ! that one so beautiful

Should have so dull an ear.

II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,

But thou art deaf as death;

All in the bloomèd May.

When thy light perisheth

That from thee issueth,

Our life evanisheth :

Oh ! stay.

Alas ! that lips so cruel-dumb

Should have so sweet a breath !

III

Fair year, with brows of royal love

Thou comest, as a king.

All in the bloomèd May.

Thy golden largess fling,

And longer hear us sing;

Though thou art fleet of wing,

Yet stay.

Alas ! that eyes so full of light

Should be so wandering !

IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen

In rings of gold yronne,¹

All in the bloomèd May.

We pri'thee pass not on;

If thou dost leave the sun,

Delight is with thee gone,

Oh ! stay.

Thou art the fairest of thy feres,

We pri'thee pass not on.

¹ ' His crispè hair in ringis was yronne.'
—Chaucer, *Knight's Tale*.

SONG

I

EVERY day hath its night :
 Every night its morn :
 Thorough dark and bright
 Winged hours are borne ;
 Ah ! welaway !
 Seasons flower and fade ;
 Golden calm and storm
 Mingle day by day.
 There is no bright form
 Doth not cast a shade—
 Ah ! welaway !

II

When we laugh, and our mirth
 Apes the happy vein,
 We're so kin to earth,
 Pleasaunce fathers pain—
 Ah ! welaway !
 Madness laugheth loud :
 Laughter bringeth tears :
 Eyes are worn away
 Till the end of fears
 Cometh in the shroud—
 Ah ! welaway !

III

All is change, woe or weal ;
 Joy is Sorrow's brother ;
 Grief and gladness steal
 Symbols of each other ;
 Ah ! welaway !
 Larks in heaven's cope
 Sing : the culvers mourn
 All the livelong day.
 Be not all forlorn :
 Let us weep in hope—
 Ah ! welaway !

HERO TO LEANDER

Oh go not yet, my love,
 The night is dark and vast ;
 The white moon is hid in her
 heaven above,
 And the waves climb high and
 fast.
 Oh ! kiss me, kiss me, once again,
 Lest thy kiss should be the last.
 Oh kiss me ere we part ;
 Grow closer to my heart.
 My heart is warmer surely than
 the bosom of the main.

Oh joy ! O bliss of blisses !
 My heart of hearts art thou.
 Come bathe me with thy kisses,
 My eyelids and my brow.
 Hark how the wild rain hisses,
 And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy
 limbs,
 So gladly doth it stir ;
 Thine eye in drops of gladness
 swims.
 I have bathed thee with the
 pleasant myrrh ;
 Thy locks are dripping balm ;
 Thou shalt not wander hence to-
 night,
 I'll stay thee with my kisses.
 To-night the roaring brine
 Will rend thy golden tresses ;
 The ocean with the morrow light
 Will be both blue and calm ;
 And the billow will embrace thee
 with a kiss as soft as mine.

No western odours wander
 On the black and moaning sea,
 And when thou art dead, Leander,
 My soul must follow thee !
 Oh go not yet, my love,
 Thy voice is sweet and low ;
 The deep salt wave breaks in
 above
 Those marble steps below.
 The turret stairs are wet
 That lead into the sea.
 Leander ! go not yet.
 The pleasant stars have set :
 Oh ! go not, go not yet,
 Or I will follow thee.

THE MYSTIC

ANGELS have talked with him, and
 showed him thrones :
 Ye knew him not : he was not one
 of ye,
 Ye scorned him with an undis-
 cerning scorn :
 Ye could not read the marvel in his
 eye,
 The still serene abstraction : he
 hath felt

The vanities of after and before ;
 Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
 The stern experiences of converse
 lives,
 The linked woes of many a fiery
 change
 Had purified, and chastened, and
 made free.

Always there stood before him,
 night and day,
 Of wayward vary-coloured circum-
 stance

The imperishable presences serene
 Colossal, without form, or sense,
 or sound,

Dim shadows but unwaning pres-
 ences

Fourfaced to four corners of the
 sky :

And yet again, three shadows,
 fronting one,

One forward, one respectant,
 three but one ;

And yet again, again and ever-
 more,

For the two first were not, but
 only seemed,

One shadow in the midst of a great
 light,

One reflex from eternity on time,
 One mighty countenance of per-
 fect calm,

Awful with most invariable eyes.
 For him the silent congregated
 hours,

Daughters of time, divinely tall,
 beneath

Severe and youthful brows, with
 shining eyes

Smiling a godlike smile (the
 innocent light

Of earliest youth pierced through
 and through with all

Keen knowledges of low-embowèd
 eld)

Upheld, and ever hold aloft the
 cloud

Which droops low hung on either
 gate of life,

Both birth and death : he in the
 centre fixt,

Saw far on each side through the
 grated gates

Most pale and clear and lovely
 distances.

He often lying broad awake, and
 yet

Remaining from the body, and
 apart

In intellect and power and will,
 hath heard

Time flowing in the middle of the
 night,

And all things creeping to a day of
 doom.

How could ye know him ? Ye
 were yet within

The narrower circle ; he had well-
 nigh reached

The last, which with a region of
 white flame,

Pure without heat, into a larger
 air

Upburning, and an ether of black
 blue,

Investeth and ingirds all other
 lives.

THE GRASSHOPPER

I

VOICE of the summer wind,
 Joy of the summer plain,
 Life of the summer hours,
 Carol clearly, bound along.

No Tithon thou as poets feign
 (Shame fall 'em they are deaf
 and blind)

But an insect lithe and strong,
 Bowing the seeded summer
 flowers.

Prove their falsehood and thy
 quarrel,

Vaulting on thine airy feet.
 Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
 Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.

Thou art a mailed warrior in youth
 and strength complete ;

Armed cap-a-pie,
 Full fair to see ;
 Unknowing fear,
 Undreading loss,

A gallant cavalier,
Sans peur et sans reproche,
 In sunlight and in shadow,
 The Bayard of the meadow.

II

I would dwell with thee,
 Merry grasshopper,
 Thou art so glad and free,
 And as light as air;
 Thou hast no sorrow or tears,
 Thou hast no compt of years,
 No withered immortality,
 But a short youth sunny and free.
 Carol clearly, bound along,
 Soon thy joy is over,
 A summer of loud song,
 And slumbers in the clover.
 What hast thou to do with evil
 In thine hour of love and revel,
 In thy heat of summer pride,
 Pushing the thick roots aside
 Of the singing flowerèd grasses,
 That brush thee with their
 silken tresses?
 What hast thou to do with evil,
 Shooting, singing, ever spring-
 ing
 In and out the emerald
 glooms,
 Ever leaping, ever singing,
 Lighting on the golden
 blooms?

LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGET- FULNESS

ERE yet my heart was sweet
 Love's tomb,
 Love laboured honey busily.
 I was the hive, and Love the bee,
 My heart the honeycomb.
 One very dark and chilly night
 Pride came beneath and held a
 light.

The cruel vapours went through
 all,
 Sweet Love was withered in his
 cell;
 Pride took Love's sweets, and by
 a spell
 Did change them into gall;
 And Memory though fed by Pride
 Did wax so thin on gall,
 Awhile she scarcely lived at all.
 What marvel that she died?

CHORUS

In an unpublished drama, written very
 early.

THE varied earth, the moving
 heaven,
 The rapid waste of roving sea,
 The fountain-pregnant mountains
 riven
 To shapes of wildest anarchy,
 By secret fire and midnight storms
 That wander round their windy
 cones,
 The subtle life, the countless forms
 Of living things, the wondrous
 tones
 Of man and beast are full of
 strange
 Astonishment and boundless
 change.

The day, the diamonded night,
 The echo, feeble child of sound,
 The heavy thunder's griding might,
 The herald lightning's starry
 bound,
 The vocal spring of bursting bloom,
 The naked summer's glowing
 birth,
 The troublous autumn's sallow
 gloom,
 The hoarhead winter paving
 earth
 With sheeny white, are full of
 strange
 Astonishment and boundless
 change.

Each sun which from the centre
 flings
 Grand music and redundant fire,
 The burning belts, the mighty
 rings,
 The murmurous planets' rolling
 choir,
 The globe-filled arch that, cleaving
 air,
 Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,
 The lawless comets as they glare,
 And thunder through the sap-
 phire deeps
 In wayward strength, are full
 of strange
 Astonishment and boundless
 change.

LOST HOPE

YOU cast to ground the hope which
once was mine :

But did the while your harsh
decree deplore,
Embalming with sweet tears the
vacant shrine,
My heart, where Hope had been
and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout
A goodly acorn grew ;
But winds from heaven shook the
acorn out,
And filled the cup with dew.

THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN weeps above the earth
all night till morn,
In darkness weeps as all ashamed
to weep,
Because the earth hath made her
state forlorn
With self-wrought evils of un-
numbered years,
And doth the fruit of her dishonour
reap.
And all the day heaven gathers
back her tears
Into her own blue eyes so clear and
deep,
And showering down the glory of
lightsome day,
Smiles on the earth's worn brow to
win her if she may.

LOVE AND SORROW

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first
green leaf
With which the fearful springtide
flecks the lea,
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to
thee
That thou hast half my heart, for
bitter grief
Doth hold the other half in
sovranty.
Thou art my heart's sun in love's
crystalline :
Yet on both sides at once thou
canst not shine :

Thine is the bright side of my
heart, and thine
My heart's day, but the shadow of
my heart,

Issue of its own substance, my
heart's night
Thou canst not lighten even with
thy light,
All powerful in beauty as thou
art.

Almeida, if my heart were sub-
stanceless,
Then might thy rays pass through
to the other side,
So swiftly, that they nowhere
would abide,
But lose themselves in utter
emptiness.
Half-light, half-shadow, let my
spirit sleep ;
They never learned to love who
never knew to weep.

TO A LADY SLEEPING

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze
upon,
Through whose dim brain the
wingèd dreams are borne,
Unroof the shrines of clearest
vision,
In honour of the silver-fleckèd
morn :
Long hath the white wave of the
virgin light
Driven back the billow of the
dreamful dark.
Thou all unwittingly prolongest
night,
Though long ago listening the
poised lark,
With eyes dropt downward
through the blue serene,
Over heaven's parapets the angel
lean.

SONNET

COULD I outwear my present state
of woe
With one brief winter, and induce
i' the spring
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily
outgrow

The wan dark coil of faded suffering—
 Forth in the pride of beauty issuing
 A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,
 Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers
 And watered vallies where the young birds sing;
 Could I thus hope my lost delight's renewing,
 I straightly would command the tears to creep
 From my charged lids; but inwardly I weep:
 Some vital heat as yet my heart is wooing:
 This to itself hath drawn the frozen rain
 From my cold eyes and melted it again.

SONNET

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon,
 And bitter blasts the screaming autumn whirl,
 All night through archways of the bridgèd pearl,
 And portals of pure silver walks the moon.
 Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,
 Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,
 And dross to gold with glorious alchemy,
 Basing thy throne above the world's annoy.
 Reign thou above the storms of sorrow and ruth
 That roar beneath; unshaken peace hath won thee:
 So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of truth;
 So shall the blessing of the meek be on thee;
 So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth,
 An honourable eld shall come upon thee.

SONNET

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of Good,
 Or propagate again her loathèd kind,
 Thronging the cells of the diseased mind,
 Hateful with hanging cheeks, a withered brood,
 Though hourly pastured on the salient blood?
 Oh! that the wind which bloweth cold or heat
 Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen beat
 Of their broad vans, and in the solitude
 Of middle space confound them, and blow back
 Their wild cries down their cavern-throats, and slake
 With points of blast-borne hail their heated eyne!
 So their wan limbs no more might come between
 The moon and the moon's reflex in the night,
 Nor blot with floating shades the solar light.

SONNET

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain,
 Down an ideal stream they ever float,
 And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
 Drown soul and sense, while wistfully they strain
 Weak eyes upon the glistening sands that robe
 The understream. The wise, could he behold
 Cathedralled caverns of thick-ribbed gold
 And branching silvers of the central globe,
 Would marvel from so beautiful a sight
 How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could flow:

But Hatred in a gold cave sits
below;
Pleached with her hair, in mail
of argent light
Shot into gold, a snake her fore-
head clips,
And skins the colour from her
trembling lips.

LOVE

I

THOU, from the first, unborn, un-
dying love,
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories
near,
Before the face of God didst
breathe and move,
Though night and pain and ruin
and death reign here.
Thou foldest, like a golden atmo-
sphere,
The very throne of the eternal
God:
Passing through thee the edicts
of his fear
Are mellowed into music, borne
abroad
By the loud winds, though they
uprend the sea,
Even from its central deeps: thine
empire
Is over all: thou wilt not brook
eclipse;
Thou goest and returnest to His
lips
Like lightning: thou dost ever
brood above
The silence of all hearts, unutter-
able Love.

II

To know thee is all wisdom, and
old age
Is but to know thee: dimly we
behold thee
Athwart the veils of evil which
infold thee.
We beat upon our aching hearts
in rage;

We cry for thee; we deem the
world thy tomb.
As dwellers in lone planets look
upon
The mighty disk of their majestic
sun,
Hollowed in awful chasms of
wheeling gloom,
Making their day dim, so we gaze
on thee.
Come, thou of many crowns,
white-robèd love,
Oh! rend the veil in twain: all
men adore thee;
Heaven crieth after thee; earth
waiteth for thee:
Breathe on thy wingèd throne,
and it shall move
In music and in light o'er land and
sea.

III

And now—methinks I gaze upon
thee now,
As on a serpent in his agonies
Awestricken Indians; what time
laid low
And crushing the thick fragrant
reeds he lies,
When the new year warmbreathed
on the earth,
Waiting to light him with her
purple skies,
Calls to him by the fountain to
uprise.
Already with the pangs of a new
birth
Strain the hot spheres of his
convulsèd eyes,
And in his writhings awful hues
begin
To wander down his sable-sheeny
sides,
Like light on troubled waters:
from within
Anon he rusheth forth with merry
din,
And in him light and joy and
strength abides;
And from his brows a crown of
living light
Looks through the thick-stemmed
woods by day and night.

ENGLISH WARSONG

WHO fears to die? Who fears
to die?

Is there any here who fears to
die?

He shall find what he fears; and
none shall grieve

For the man who fears to
die;

But the withering scorn of the
many shall cleave

To the man who fears to die.

Chorus.—

Shout for England!

Ho! for England!

George for England!

Merry England!

England for ay!

The hollow at heart shall crouch
forlorn,

He shall eat the bread of com-
mon scorn;

It shall be steeped in the salt, salt
tear,

Shall be steeped in his own salt
tear:

Far better, far better he never
were born

Than to shame merry England
here.

Chorus.—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient
enemy;

Hark! he shouteth—the ancient
enemy!

On the ridge of the hill his banners
rise;

They stream like fire in the
skies;

Hold up the Lion of England on
high

Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

Chorus.—Shout for England! etc.

Come along! we alone of the
earth are free;

The child in our cradles is bolder
than he;

For where is the heart and
strength of slaves?

Oh! where is the strength of
slaves?

He is weak! we are strong; he a
slave, we are free;

Come along! we will dig their
graves.

Chorus.—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient
enemy;

Will he dare to battle with the
free?

Spur along! spur amain! charge
to the fight:

Charge! charge to the fight!

Hold up the Lion of England on
high!

Shout for God and our right!

Chorus.—Shout for England! etc.

NATIONAL SONG

THERE is no land like England

Where'er the light of day be;

There are no hearts like English
hearts,

Such hearts of oak as they be.

There is no land like England

Where'er the light of day be;

There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

Chorus.—

For the French the pope may
shrive 'em,

For the devil a whit we heed 'em:

As for the French, God speed 'em

Unto their heart's desire,

And the merry devil drive 'em

Through the water and the fire.

Full Chorus.—

Our glory is our freedom,

We lord it o'er the sea;

We are the sons of freedom,

We are free.

There is no land like England,

Where'er the light of day be;

There are no wives like English
wives,

So fair and chaste as they be.
 There is no land like England,
 Where'er the light of day be;
 There are no maids like English
 maids,
 So beautiful as they be.

Chorus.—For the French, etc.

DUALISMS

Two bees within a chrystal
 flower-bell rockèd
 Hum a lovelay to the west
 wind at noontide.
 Both alike, they buzz to-
 gether,
 Both alike, they hum to-
 gether
 Through and through the
 flowered heather.
 Where in a creeping cove the wave
 unshockèd
 Lays itself calm and wide,
 Over a stream two birds of
 glancing feather
 Do woo each other, carolling
 together.
 Both alike, they glide to-
 gether.
 Side by side;
 Both alike, they sing to-
 gether,
 Arching blueglossèd necks be-
 neath the purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love
 adown the lea are singing,
 As they gambol, lily garlands
 ever stringing:
 Both in blosmwhite silk
 are frockèd:
 Like, unlike, they roam to-
 gether
 Under a summer vault of
 golden weather;
 Like, unlike, they sing to-
 gether
 Side by side.
 Mid-May's darling golden-
 lockèd,
 Summer's tanling diamond-
 eyed.

οἱ πέοντες

I

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all
 dreams are true,
 All visions wild and strange;
 Man is the measure of all truth
 Unto himself. All truth is
 change:
 All men do walk in sleep, and all
 Have faith in that they
 dream:
 For all things are as they seem to
 all,
 And all things flow like a stream.

II

There is no rest, no calm, no
 pause,
 Nor good nor ill, nor light nor
 shade,
 Nor essence nor eternal laws:
 For nothing is but all is made.
 But if I dream that all these are,
 They are to me for that I
 dream;
 For all things are as they seem to
 all,
 And all things flow like a stream.

Argal—this very opinion is only true
 relatively to the flowing philosophers.

From "Poems," 1833.

SONNET

O BEAUTY, passing beauty!
 sweetest Sweet!
 How can'st thou let me waste
 my youth in sighs?
 I only ask to sit beside thy feet.
 Thou knowest I dare not look
 into thine eyes.
 Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare
 not fold
 My arms about thee—scarcely
 dare to speak.
 And nothing seems to me so wild
 and bold,
 As with one kiss to touch thy
 blessed cheek.
 Methinks if I should kiss thee, no
 control

Within the thrilling brain could
keep afloat

The subtle spirit. Even while
I spoke,

The bare word KISS hath made my
inner soul

To tremble like a lute string, ere
the note

Hath melted in the silence
that it broke.

THE HESPERIDES.¹

Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree.

—Comus.

THE North wind fall'n, in the
new-starrèd night

Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond

The hoary promontory of Soloë

Past Thymiatèrion, in calmèd
bays,

Between the southern and the
western Horn,

Heard neither warbling of the
nightingale,

Nor melody o' the Lybian lotus-
flute

Blown seaward from the shore;
but from a slope

That ran bloombright into the
Atlantic blue,

Beneath a highland leaning down
a weight

Of cliffs, and zoned below with
cedar shade,

Came voices, like the voices in a
dream,

Continuous, till he reached the
outer sea.

SONG

I

THE golden apple, the golden
apple, the hallowed fruit,

Guard it well, guard it warily,

Singing airily,

Standing about the charmèd root.

Round about all is mute,

¹ Tennyson, in a conversation with his son, regretted that he had done away with this poem from among his 'Juvenilia' (Life, i. 61).

As the snowfield on the mountain-
peaks,

As the sandfield at the mountain-
foot.

Crocodiles in briny creeks

Sleep and stir not: all is mute.

If ye sing not, if ye make false
measure,

We shall lose eternal pleasure,

Worth eternal want of rest.

Laugh not loudly: watch the
treasure

Of the wisdom of the west.

In a corner wisdom whispers.

Five and three

(Let it not be preached abroad)
make an awful mystery.

For the blossom unto threefold
music bloweth;

Evermore it is born anew;

And the sap to threefold music
floweth,

From the root

Drawn in the dark,

Up to the fruit,

Creeping under the fragrant
bark,

Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and
thro'.

Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,

Looking warily

Every way,

Guard the apple nigh and day,

Lest one from the East come and
take it away.

II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper,
watch, watch, ever and ay,

Looking under silver hair with a
silver eye.

Father, twinkle not thy steadfast
sight;

Kingdoms lapse, and climates
change, and races die;

Honour comes with mystery;

Hoarded wisdom brings delight.

Number, tell them over and
number

How many the mystic fruit tree
holds,

Lest the red-combed dragon slum-
ber

Rolled together in purple folds.

Look to him, father, lest he wink,
 and the golden apple be stol'n
 away,
 For his ancient heart is drunk with
 overwatchings night and day,
 Round about the hallowed fruit-
 tree curled—
 Sing away, sing aloud evermore in
 the wind, without stop,
 Lest his scaled eyelid drop,
 For he is older than the world.
 If he waken, we waken,
 Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
 If he sleep, we sleep,
 Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
 If the golden apple be taken
 The world will be overwise.
 Five links, a golden chain, are we,
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters
 three,
 Bound about the golden tree.

III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper,
 watch, watch, night and day,
 Lest the old wound of the world
 be healèd,
 The glory unsealèd,
 The golden apple stol'n away,
 And the ancient secret revealèd.
 Look from west to east along:
 Father, old Himala weakens,
 Caucasus is bold and strong.
 Wandering waters unto wandering
 waters call;
 Let them clash together, foam and
 fall.
 Out of watchings, out of wiles,
 Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
 All things are not told to all.
 Half-round the mantling night is
 drawn,
 Purple-fringèd with even and
 dawn.
 Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening
 hateth morn.

IV

Every flower and every fruit the
 redolent breath
 Of this warm seawind ripeneth,
 Arching the billow in his sleep;
 But the landwind wandereth,
 Broken by the highland-steep,

Two streams upon the violet deep:
 For the western sun and the
 western star,
 And the low west wind, breathing
 afar,
 The end of day and beginning of
 night
 Make the apple holy and bright;
 Holy and bright, round and full,
 bright and blest,
 Mellowed in a land of rest;
 Watch it warily day and night;
 All good things are in the west.
 Till midnight the cool east light
 Is shut out by the round of the
 tall hillbrow;
 But when the full-faced sunset
 yellowly
 Stays on the flowering arch of the
 bough,
 The luscious fruitage clustereth
 mellowly,
 Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,
 Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
 The world is wasted with fire and
 sword,
 But the apple of gold hangs over
 the sea.
 Five links, a golden chain, are we,
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters
 three,
 Daughters three,
 Bound about
 All round about
 The gnarlèd bole of the charmèd
 tree.
 The golden apple, the golden
 apple, the hallowed fruit,
 Guard it well, guard it warily,
 Watch it warily,
 Singing airily,
 Standing about the charmèd root.

[Note to *Rosalind* (see p. 299).]

Perhaps the following lines may be
 allowed to stand as a separate poem;
 originally they made part of the text,
 where they were manifestly superfluous.

My *Rosalind*, my *Rosalind*,
 Bold, subtle, careless *Rosalind*,
 Is one of those who know no strife
 Of inward woe or outward fear;
 To whom the slope and stream of
 life,

The life before, the life behind,
 In the ear, from far and near,
 Chimeth musically clear.
 My falcon-hearted Rosalind,
 Fullsailed before a vigorous wind,
 Is one of those, who cannot weep
 For others' woes, but overleap
 All the petty shocks and fears
 That trouble life in early years,
 With a flash of frolic scorn
 And keen delight, that never falls
 Away from freshness, self-upborne
 With such gladness as, whenever
 The fresh-flushing springtime calls
 To the flooding waters cool,
 Young fishes, on an April morn,
 Up and down a rapid river,
 Leap the little waterfalls
 That sing into the pebbled pool.
 My happy falcon, Rosalind,
 Hath daring fancies of her own,
 Fresh as the dawn before the day,
 Fresh as the early seasmell blown
 Through vineyards from an inland
 bay.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 Because no shadow on you falls
 Think you hearts are tennis balls,
 To play with, wanton Rosalind ?

SONG

Who can say
 Why To-day
 To-morrow will be yesterday ?
 Who can tell
 Why to smell
 The violet, recalls the dewy prime
 Of youth and buried time ?
 The cause is nowhere found in
 rhyme.

SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE
 OUTBREAK OF THE POLISH
 INSURRECTION

Blow ye the trumpet, gather
 from afar
 The hosts to battle : be not bought
 and sold.
 Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of
 the bold ;

Break through your iron shackles
 —fling them far.
 O for those days of Piast, ere the
 Czar
 Grew to this strength among his
 deserts cold ;
 When even to Moscow's cupolas
 were rolled
 The growing murmurs of the
 Polish war !
 Now must your noble anger blaze
 out more
 Than when from Sobieski, clan by
 clan,
 The Moslem myriads fell, and fled
 before—
 Than when Zamoysky smote the
 Tartar Khan ;
 Than earlier, when on the Baltic
 shore
 Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

O DARLING ROOM

I

O DARLING room, my heart's
 delight,
 Dear room, the apple of my sight,
 With thy two couches soft and
 white,
 There is no room so exquisite,
 No little room so warm and bright,
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
 And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
 Musical Lurlei ; and between
 The hills to Bingen have I been,
 Bingen in Darmstadt, where the
 Rhene
 Curves toward Mentz, a woody
 scene.

III

Yet never did there meet my
 sight,
 In any town, to left or right,
 A little room so exquisite,
 With two such couches, soft and
 white
 Not any room so warm and bright,
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,
 Crusty Christopher;
 You did mingle blame and praise,
 Rusty Christopher.
 When I learnt from whom it came,
 I forgave you all the blame,
 Musty Christopher;
 I could *not* forgive the praise,
 Fusty Christopher.

THE SKIPPING-ROPE

SURE never yet was Antelope
 Could skip so lightly by.
 Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
 Will hit you in the eye.
 How lightly whirls the skipping-
 rope!
 How fairy-like you fly!
 Go, get you gone, you muse and
 mope—
 I hate that silly sigh.
 Nay, dearest, teach me how to
 hope,
 Or tell me how to die.
 There, take it, take my skipping-
 rope,
 And hang yourself thereby.

THE RINGLET

[*Enoch Arden, etc.*, 1864.]

I

I

'YOUR ringlets, your ringlets,
 That look so golden-gay,
 If you will give me one, but one,
 To kiss it night and day,
 Then never chilling touch of Time
 Will turn it silver-grey;
 And then shall I know it is all true
 gold
 To flame and sparkle and stream
 as of old,
 Till all the comets in heaven are
 cold,
 And all her stars decay.'
 'Then take it, love, and put it by;
 This cannot change, nor yet can I.'

II

'My ringlet, my ringlet,
 That art so golden-gay,
 Now never chilling touch of Time
 Can turn thee silver-grey;
 And a lad may wink, and a girl
 may hint,
 And a fool may say his say;
 For my doubts and fears were all
 amiss,
 And I swear henceforth by this
 and this,
 That a doubt will only come for a
 kiss,
 And a fear to be kiss'd away.'
 'Then kiss it, love, and put it by;
 If this can change, why so can I.'

II

I

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 I kiss'd you night and day,
 And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 You still are golden-gay,
 But Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 You should be silver-grey:
 For what is this which now I'm told,
 I that took you for true gold,
 She that gave you's bought and
 sold,
 Sold, sold.

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 She blush'd a rosy red,
 When Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 She clipt you from her head,
 And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 She gave you me, and said,
 'Come, kiss it, love, and put it by;
 If this can change, why so can I.'
 O fie, you golden nothing, fie,
 You golden lie.

III

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 I count you much to blame,
 For Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 You put me much to shame,
 So Ringlet, O Ringlet,
 I doom you to the flame.
 For what is this which now I learn,
 Has given all my faith a turn?
 Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,
 Burn, burn.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER

[This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.

A young lover, Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel of it. He speaks of having been haunted in delirium by visions and the sound of bells, sometimes tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.] * * *

HE flies the event: he leaves the event to me:

Poor Julian—how he rush'd away;
the bells,

Those marriage bells, echoing in
ear and heart—

But cast a parting glance at me,
you saw,

As who should say "continue."
Well, he had

One golden hour—of triumph
shall I say?

Solace at least—before he left his
home.

Would you had seen him in that
hour of his!

He moved thro' all of it majesti-
cally—

Restrain'd himself quite to the
close—but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's
marriage-bells,

Or prophets of them in his fan-
tasy,

I never ask'd: but Lionel and the
girl

Were wedded, and our Julian
came again

Back to his mother's house among
the pines.

But these, their gloom, the moun-
tains and the Bay,

The whole land weigh'd him down
as *Ætna* does

The Giant of Mythology: he
would go,

Would leave the land for ever, and
had gone

Surely, but for a whisper 'Go not
yet,'

Some warning, and divinely as it
seem'd

By that which follow'd—but of
this I deem

As of the visions that he told—the
event

Glanced back upon them in his
after life,

And partly made them—tho' he
knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would
not look at her—

No not for months: but, when the
eleventh moon

After their marriage lit the lover's
Bay,

Heard yet once more the tolling
bell, and said,

Would you could toll me out of
life, but found—

All softly as his mother broke it to
him—

A crueller reason than a crazy
ear,

For that low knell tolling his lady
dead—

Dead—and had lain three days
without a pulse:

All that look'd on her had pro-
nounced her dead.

And so they bore her (for in
Julian's land

They never nail a dumb head up
in elm),

Bore her free-faced to the free airs
of heaven,

And laid her in the vault of her
own kin.

What did he then? not die: he
is here and hale—

Not plunge headforemost from
the mountain there,

And leave the name of Lover's
Leap: not he:

He knew the meaning of the
whisper now,

Thought that he knew it. 'This,
I stay'd for this;

O love, I have not seen you for so
long.

Now, now, will I go down into the
grave,
I will be all alone with all I
love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is
his no more :
The dead returns to me, and I go
down
To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering
the dim vault,
And, making there a sudden light,
beheld
All round about him that which
all will be.
The light was but a flash, and
went again.
Then at the far end of the vault he
saw
His lady with the moonlight on
her face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison,
bars
Of black and bands of silver,
which the moon
Struck from an open grating over-
head
High in the wall, and all the rest
of her
Drown'd in the gloom and horror
of the vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to
pass, to sleep,
To rest, to be with her—till the
great day
Peal'd on us with that music which
rights all,
And raised us hand in hand.' And
kneeling there
Down in the dreadful dust that
once was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was
loving hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a
love as mine—
Not such as mine, no, nor for such
as her—
He softly put his arm about her
neck
And kiss'd her more than once,
till helpless death

And silence made him bold—nay,
but I wrong him,
He revered his dear lady even
in death;
But, placing his true hand upon
her heart,
'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd,
'not even death
Can chill you all at once': then
starting, thought
His dreams had come again. 'Do
I wake or sleep ?
Or am I made immortal, or my
love
Mortal once more ?' It beat—
the heart—it beat :
Faint—but it beat : at which his
own began
To pulse with such a vehemence
that it drown'd
The feebler motion underneath his
hand.
But when at last his doubts were
satisfied,
He raised her softly from the
sepulchre,
And, wrapping her all over with
the cloak
He came in, and now striding fast,
and now
Sitting awhile to rest, but ever-
more
Holding his golden burthen in his
arms,
So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where
she was born.

There the good mother's kindly
ministering,
With half a night's appliances, re-
call'd
Her fluttering life : she raised an
eye that ask'd
'Where ?' till the things familiar
to her youth
Had made a silent answer : then
she spoke,
'Here ! and how came I here ?'
and learning it
(They told her somewhat rashly
as I think)
At once began to wander and to
wail,

'Ay, but you know that you must
give me back :

Send ! bid him come'; but Lionel
was away—

Stung by his loss had vanish'd,
none knew where.

'He casts me out,' she wept,
'and goes'—a wail

That seeming something, yet was
nothing, born

Not from believing mind, but
shatter'd nerve,

Yet haunting Julian, as her own
reproof

At some precipitance in her burial.
Then, when her own true spirit

had return'd,
'O yes, and you,' she said, 'and

none but you.

For you have given me life and
love again,

And none but you yourself shall
tell him of it,

And you shall give me back when
he returns.'

'Stay then a little,' answer'd
Julian, 'here,

And keep yourself, none knowing,
to yourself;

And I will do your will. I may
not stay,

No, not an hour; but send me
notice of him

When he returns, and then will I
return,

And I will make a solemn offering
of you

To him you love.' And faintly
she replied,

'And I will do *your* will, and none
shall know.'

Not know ? with such a secret
to be known.

But all their house was old and
loved them both,

And all the house had known the
loves of both;

Had died almost to serve them any
way,

And all the land was waste and
solitary :

And then he rode away; but after
this,

An hour or two, Camilla's travail
came

Upon her, and that day a boy was
born,

Heir of his face and land, to
Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode
away,

And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him;

myself was then
Travelling that land, and meant to

rest an hour;

And sitting down to such a base
repast,

It makes me angry yet to speak of
it—

I heard a groaning overhead, and
climb'd

The moulder'd stairs (for every-
thing was vile)

And in a loft, with none to wait on
him,

Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton
alone,

Raving of dead men's dust and
beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and
rush !

But there from fever and my care
of him

Sprang up a friendship that may
help us yet.

For while we roam'd along the
dreary coast,

And waited for her message, piece
by piece

I learnt the drearier story of his
life;

And, tho' he loved and honour'd
Lionel,

Found that the sudden wail his
lady made

Dwelt in his fancy: did he know
her worth,

Her beauty even ? should he not
be taught,

Ev'n by the price that others set
upon it,

The value of that jewel he had to
guard ?

Suddenly came her notice and
we past,
I with our lover to his native
Bay.

This love is of the brain, the
mind, the soul :
That makes the sequel pure ; tho'
some of us
Beginning at the sequel know no
more.
Not such am I : and yet I say, the
bird
That will not hear my call, how-
ever sweet,
But if my neighbour whistle
answers him—
What matter ? there are others in
the wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought
him crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as
needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes
of hers—
Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her
eyes alone,
But all from these to where she
touch'd on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's
seem'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she
came
To greet us, her young hero in her
arms !
'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave
me life again.
He, but for you, had never seen it
once.
His other father you ! Kiss him,
and then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian
too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken
heart ! his own
Sent such a flame into his face, I
knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit
him there.

But he was all the more resolved
to go,
And sent at once to Lionel, pray-
ing him
By that great love they both had
borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour
with him
Before he left the land for ever-
more ;
And then to friends—they were
not many—who lived
Scatteringly about that lonely
land of his,
And bade them to a banquet of
farewells.

And Julian made a solemn
feast : I never
Sat at a costlier ; for all round his
hall
From column on to column, as in
a wood,
Not such as here—an equatorial
one,
Great garlands swung and blos-
som'd ; and beneath,
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of
Art,
Chalice and salver, wines that
Heaven knows when,
Had suck'd the fire of some for-
gotten sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years
of gloom,
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby-
cups
Where nymph and god ran ever
round in gold—
Others of glass as costly—some
with gems
Movable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value—
Ah heavens !
Why need I tell you all ?—suffice
to say
That whatsoever such a house as
his,
And his was old, has in it rare or
fair
Was brought before the guest :
and they, the guests,
Wonder'd at some strange light in
Julian's eyes

(I told you that he had his golden hour),
 And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
 To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his,
 And that resolved self-exile from a land
 He never would revisit, such a feast
 So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than rich,
 But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall
 Two great funereal curtains, looping down,
 Parted a little ere they met the floor,
 About a picture of his lady, taken
 Some years before, and falling hid the frame.
 And just above the parting was a lamp:
 So the sweet figure folded round with night
 Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate and drank,
 And might—the wines being of such nobleness—
 Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
 And something weird and wild about it all:
 What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,
 Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and anon
 A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
 Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use;
 And when the feast was near an end, he said:

'There is a custom in the Orient, friends—
 I read of it in Persia—when a man
 Will honour those who feast with him, he brings

And shows them whatsoever he accounts
 Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
 Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.

This custom—'

Pausing here a moment, all
 The guests broke in upon him with meeting hands
 And cries about the banquet—
 'Beautiful!
 Who could desire more beauty at a feast?'

The lover answer'd, 'There is more than one
 Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not
 Before my time, but hear me to the close.
 This custom steps yet further when the guest
 Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.
 For after he has shown him gems or gold,
 He brings and sets before him in rich guise
 That which is thrice as beautiful as these,
 The beauty that is dearest to his heart—
 "O my heart's lord, would I could show you," he says,
 "Ev'n my heart, too." And I propose to-night
 To show you what is dearest to my heart,
 And my heart, too.

'But solve me first a doubt.
 I knew a man, nor many years ago;
 He had a faithful servant, one who loved
 His master more than all on earth beside.
 He falling sick, and seeming close on death,
 His master would not wait until he died,
 But bade his menials bear him from the door,

And leave him in the public way
to die.

I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant,
took him home,

And fed, and cherish'd him, and
saved his life.

I ask you now, should this first
master claim

His service, whom does it belong
to ? him

Who thrust him out, or him who
saved his life ?'

This question, so flung down
before the guests,
And balanced either way by each,
at length

When some were doubtful how the
law would hold,

Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate
of phrase.

And he beginning languidly—his
loss

Weigh'd on him yet—but warming
as he went,

Glanced at the point of law, to
pass it by,

Affirming that as long as either
lived,

By all the laws of love and grate-
fulness,

The service of the one so saved
was due

All to the saver—adding, with a
smile,

The first for many weeks—a semi-
smile

As at a strong conclusion—'body
and soul

And life and limbs, all his to work
his will.'

Then Julian made a secret sign
to me

To bring Camilla down before
them all.

And crossing her own picture as
she came,

And looking as much lovelier as
herself

Is lovelier than all others—on her
head

A diamond circlet, and from under
this

A veil, that seem'd no more than
gilded air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern
gauze

With seeds of gold—so, with that
grace of hers,

Slow-moving as a wave against the
wind,

That flings a mist behind it in the
sun—

And bearing high in arms the
mighty babe,

The younger Julian, who himself
was crown'd

With roses, none so rosy as him-
self—

And over all her babe and her the
jewels

Of many generations of his
house

Sparkled and flash'd, for he had
decked them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love—
So she came in :—I am long in

telling it—

I never yet beheld a thing so
strange,

Sad, sweet, and strange together—
floated in,—

While all the guests in mute
amazement rose,—

And slowly pacing to the middle
hall,

Before the board, there paused and
stood, her breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon
her feet,

Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
But him she carried, him nor

lights nor feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ;
who cared

Only to use his own, and staring
wide

And hungering for the guilt and
jewell'd world

About him, look'd, as he is like to
prove,

When Julian goes, the lord of all
he saw.

'My guests,' said Julian : 'you
 are honour'd now
 Ev'n to the uttermost : in her
 behold
 Of all my treasures the most
 beautiful,
 Of all things upon earth the
 dearest to me.'
 Then waving us a sign to seat
 ourselves,
 Led his dear lady to a chair of
 state.
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his
 face
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire
 again
 Thrice in a second, felt him trem-
 ble too,
 And heard him muttering, 'So
 like, so like ;
 She never had a sister. I knew
 none.
 Some cousin of his and hers—O
 God, so like !'
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if
 she were.
 She shook, and cast her eyes down,
 and was dumb.
 And then some other question'd if
 she came
 From foreign lands, and still she
 did not speak.
 Another, if the boy were hers : but
 she
 To all their queries answer'd not a
 word,
 Which made the amazement more,
 till one of them
 Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre !'
 But his friend
 Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not
 at least
 The spectre that will speak if
 spoken to.
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
 Prove, as I almost dread to find
 her, dumb !'

But Julian, sitting by her,
 answer'd all :
 'She is but dumb, because in her
 you see
 That faithful servant whom we
 spoke about,

Obedient to her second master
 now ;
 Which will not last. I have here
 to-night a guest
 So bound to me by common love
 and loss—
 What ! shall I bind him more ? in
 his behalf,
 Shall I exceed the Persian, giving
 him
 That which of all things is the
 dearest to me,
 Not only showing ? and he himself
 pronounced
 That my rich gift is wholly mine
 to give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise
 all of you
 Not to break in on what I say by
 word
 Or whisper, while I show you all
 my heart.'
 And then began the story of his
 love
 As here to-day, but not so
 wordily—
 The passionate moment would not
 suffer that—
 Past thro' his visions to the burial ;
 thence
 Down to this last strange hour in
 his own hall ;
 And then rose up, and with him
 all his guests
 Once more as by enchantment ;
 all but he,
 Lionel, who fain had risen, but
 fell again,
 And sat as if in chains—to whom
 he said :

'Take my free gift, my cousin,
 for your wife ;
 And were it only for the giver's
 sake,
 And tho' she seem so like the one
 you lost,
 Yet cast her not away so sud-
 denly,
 Lest there be none left here to
 bring her back :
 I leave this land for ever.' Here
 he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by
 one hand,
 And bearing, on one arm the noble
 babe,
 He slowly brought them both to
 Lionel.
 And there the widower husband
 and dead wife
 Rush'd each at each with a cry,
 that rather seem'd
 For some new death than for a life
 renew'd;
 Whereat the very babe began to
 wail;
 At once they turn'd, and caught
 and brought him in
 To their charm'd circle, and, half-
 killing him
 With kisses, round him closed and
 claspt again.
 But Lionel, when at last he freed
 himself
 From wife and child, and lifted up
 a face
 All over glowing with the sun of
 life,
 And love, and boundless thanks—
 the sight of this
 So frightened our good friend, that
 turning to me
 And saying, 'It is over: let us
 go'—
 There were our horses ready at the
 doors—
 We bade them no farewell, but
 mounting these
 He past for ever from his native
 land;
 And I with him, my Julian, back
 to mine.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the
 seas, the hills and the plains—
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision
 of Him Who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be
 not that which He seems?
 Dreams are true while they last,
 and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight
 of body and limb,
 Are they not sign and symbol of
 thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself
 art the reason why;
 For is He not all but thou, that
 hast power to feel "I am I?"

Glory about thee, without thee;
 and thou fulfillest thy doom,
 Making Him broken gleams, and a
 stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears,
 and Spirit with Spirit can
 meet—
 Closer is He than breathing, and
 nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul,
 and let us rejoice,
 For if He thunder by law the
 thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at
 all, says the fool;
 For all we have power to see is a
 straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear,
 and the eye of man cannot
 see;
 But if we could see and hear, this
 Vision—were it not He?

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
 I pluck you out of the crannies;—
 Hold you here, root and all, in
 my hand,
 Little flower—but if I could under-
 stand
 What you are, root and all, and all
 in all,
 I should know what God and man
 is.

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